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REPORTS OF CASES

IN THE

SUPREME COURT OF NEBRASKA.

JANUARY AND SEPTEMBER TERMS, 1905.

VOLUME LXXIV.

HARRY C. LINDSAY,
OFFICIAL REPORTER.

PREPARED AND EDITED BY
HENRY P. STODDART,
DEPUTY REPORTER.

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BY HARRY C. LINDSAY, REPORTER OF THE SUPREME COURT,

In behalf of the people of Nebraska.

MAY 11 1908

SUPREME COURT

DURING THE PERIOD OF THESE REPORTS.

JUSTICES.

SILAS A. HOLCOMB, CHIEF JUSTICE.

SAMUEL H. SEDGWICK, ASSOCIATE JUSTICE.

JOHN B. BARNES, ASSOCIATE JUSTICE.

COMMISSIONERS.

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JOHN H. AMES.

WILLIS D. OLDHAM.

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WILLIAM T. THOMPSON.....Deputy Attorney General
HARRY C. LINDSAY.....Reporter and Clerk
HENRY P. STODDART.....Deputy Reporter
VICTOR SEYMOUR.....Deputy Clerk

JUDICIAL DISTRICTS, AND DISTRICT JUDGES OFFICI- ATING AT THE ISSUANCE OF THIS VOLUME.

NUMBER OF DISTRICT	COUNTIES IN DISTRICT	JUDGES IN DISTRICT	RESIDENCE OF JUDGE
First.....	Gage, Jefferson, Johnson, Nebraska, Pawnee and Richardson.	John B. Raper..... William H. Kelligar.	Pawnee City. Auburn.
Second.....	Cass and Otoe.	Paul Jessen.....	Nebraska City.
Third.....	Lancaster.....	Albert J. Cornish Lincoln Frost Edward P. Holmes...	Lincoln. Lincoln. Lincoln.
Fourth	Burt, Douglas, Sarpy and Washington.	George A. Day..... Lee S. Estelle..... Howard Kennedy, Jr. William A. Redick... Willis G. Sears Abraham L. Sutton.. Alexander C. Troup..	Omaha. Omaha. Omaha. Omaha. Tekamah. South Omaha. Omaha.
Fifth	Butler, Hamilton, Polk, Saunders, Seward and York.	Arthur J. Evans. ... Benjamin F. Good...	David City. Wahoo.
Sixth	Colfax, Dodge, Merrick, Nance and Platte.	Conrad Hollenbeck.. James G. Reeder. . .	Fremont. Columbus.
Seventh.....	Clay, Fillmore, Nuckolls, Saline and Thayer.	Leslie G. Hurd.....	Harvard.
Eighth.....	Cedar, Cumming, Dakota, Dixon, Stanton and Thurston.	Guy T. Graves.....	Pender.
Ninth	Antelope, Knox, Madison, Pierce and Wayne.	Anson A. Welch.....	Neligh.
Tenth.....	Adams, Franklin, Harlan, Kearney, Phelps and Webster.	Ed L. Adams.....	Minden.
Eleventh.....	Blaine, Boone, Garfield, Grant, Greeley, Hall, Hooker, Howard, Loup, Thomas, Valley and Wheeler.	John R. Hanna..... James N. Paul.....	Greeley. St. Paul.
Twelfth.....	Buffalo, Custer, Dawson and Sherman.	Bruno O. Hostetler...	Kearney.
Thirteenth ..	Banner, Cheyenne, Deuel, Keith, Kimball, Lin- coln, Logan, McPherson, Perkins and Scott's Bluff.	Hanson M. Grimes. . .	North Platte.
Fourteenth...	Chase, Dundy, Furnas, Frontier, Gosper, Hayes, Hitchcock and Red Wil- low.	Robert C. Orr.....	McCook.
Fifteenth	Box Butte, Brown, Cherry, Dawes, Holt, Keya Paha, Rock, Sheridan and Sioux.	James J. Harrington. William H. Westover.	O'Neill. Rushville.

PRACTICING ATTORNEYS.

ADMITTED SINCE THE PUBLICATION OF VOL. LXXIII.

FURSE, WILLIAM J.

LOOS, JOHN G.

HAMILTON, ALEXANDER W.

PINKETT, HARRISON J.



AMENDED RULES OF THE SUPREME COURT.

1 SECTION 1. (Submission of Causes.)—Causes will be taken up and heard in their order on the docket. A cause shall be regarded as regularly reached for submission at the expiration of the time hereinafter provided for the service and filing of briefs. Any cause may, however, be submitted upon the written stipulation of the parties there-to providing for such submission on printed briefs accompanied by or containing agreed printed abstract of the record and evidence upon which the case is to be determined.

(Default.)—Whenever a cause is reached and the brief of the party having the affirmative is not on file, the judgment will be affirmed or the proceeding dismissed. When default has been made by the other party and there is due proof of service of process and the briefs of the party holding the affirmative are on file with proof of service thereof within the time provided by Rule 9, he may proceed *ex parte*. The hearing of no cause shall be delayed by default of either party in serving or filing briefs. To avoid such results the case will be disposed of as if the delinquent party's brief had not been served; Provided, that the court may under special circumstances and on suitable terms otherwise order.

9. (Briefs.)—At the time of docketing each case the clerk of this court shall estimate the probable date on which the same will be reached for hearing, and thereupon fix and enter on the appearance docket the time, to be known as Rule Day, within which the plaintiff, appellant or relator shall serve his brief of points and citations in support thereof on the opposite party or his attorney of record, which rule day shall be not less than sixty days before the date of hearing so estimated by the clerk. Within thirty days after Rule Day or within thirty days after such service the opposite party shall serve his brief on the first party who may, at his own expense, reply thereto within ten days thereafter.

(Criminal Cases.)—In criminal cases the fortieth day after the docketing of the case shall be Rule Day.

(Advanced Cases.)—In advanced cases Rule Day shall be the thirtieth day after the order of advancement is entered.

(When Filed.)—Ten copies of each brief so prepared by either party, together with proof of service of the same on the opposite party, shall be filed in the clerk's office before the case is submitted.

(Rehearings.)—Within thirty days after a rehearing has been allowed the party holding the affirmative may serve a printed brief of

his points and citations on the opposite party or his attorney of record, by whom in turn a like brief in answer may be served within thirty days after the service of the first required brief, or after the service of a notice that the party holding the affirmative will stand on his original brief, to which answer brief the first party may reply within ten days at his own expense. Ten copies of each brief so prepared and served on rehearing, together with proof of service, shall be filed in the clerk's office before the case is submitted.

(Cross-Appeals.)—A cross-appellant shall serve his brief of points and citations upon the cross-appellee or his attorney of record at or before the time fixed by the clerk as Rule Day. A cross-appellee shall serve his brief within thirty days after Rule Day or service of briefs on him.

(Leave to File Briefs.)—A party in default for want of briefs may be permitted to serve and file them out of time by leave of court upon satisfactory showing of diligence and upon such terms as to costs as the court may direct. Where a cause has been regularly reached in its order and placed on the trial list and calendar for submission at a specified session of the court, and leave is applied for and granted to serve and file briefs by a party who is in default, thereby causing a continuance until a subsequent session, the court may not only in its discretion award against such party taxation absolutely of such portion of the ordinary taxable costs made or to be made in the case as it may deem proper, but also and in addition thereto, a reasonable attorney's fee to the opposite party for attendance of counsel at the session, to be taxed as a part of the costs in the case.

10. (Briefs—How Printed.)—All briefs shall be printed on good book paper on pages eight inches wide and eleven inches long, small pica type, leaded lines; the printed matter to be four inches wide and seven inches long, with a margin of two inches; but the type in which extracts are printed may be small pica solid or brevier leaded. The heading of each brief shall show the title of the cause, the court from which the cause was brought, the names of counsel filing the brief and shall also indicate in whose behalf the brief is filed.

(References and Citations.)—Each brief shall by number designate the several pages of the record containing matter bearing upon the questions discussed in such brief. Every reference to an adjudicated case shall be by the title thereof, as well as by the volume and page where it may be found, and the particular edition of any text book referred to must be given in connection with the cited page or section thereof.

11. (Costs.)—When the parties or their attorneys shall furnish their printed briefs in conformity to the rules of this court, or briefs and printed abstracts under stipulation for submission as provided for in rule 2, it shall be the duty of the clerk to tax a printer's fee at the rate of one dollar for every five hundred words embraced in a single copy of the same, against the unsuccessful party not furnishing

the same, to be collected and paid to the successful party as other costs. *No costs shall be taxed for printing briefs not printed, served and filed in conformity with the foregoing rules.* When unnecessary costs have been made by either party the court will, upon application, order the same to be taxed to the party making them, without reference to the disposition of the case.

In Memoriam.

AMASA COBB.

At the session of the supreme court of the state of Nebraska, November 21, 1905, there being present Honorable SILAS A. HOLCOMB, chief justice, Honorable SAMUEL H. SEDGWICK and Honorable JOHN B. BARNES, associate justices, the following proceedings were had:

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONORS:

Your committee to whom was referred the sad duty of preparing and presenting to this court resolutions which should express the high esteem in which our departed brother AMASA COBB was held, by leave of court submit the following:

Resolved, That in the death of AMASA COBB the state has sustained a distinct loss and the bar one of its most honored and revered members; that we recognize in AMASA COBB an honorable, clean, high-minded, patriotic citizen, who in the trying hour of his country's need responded gallantly to its call and gave to his country his best services on the field of battle and in the halls of congress; that GENERAL COBB was a man of high character and sterling worth, and stood for the best thought of his day and the highest ideals of his time. His life was a constant inspiration to all who came in contact with him for high, noble and unselfish living. For more than 14 years he was an honored member of this court. During his entire public and official career, no tinge of suspicion ever soiled his fair name, and he discharged his official duties fairly, impartially and fearlessly, and rendered to his country and state lasting and valuable services.

Resolved, That while he was elected to high places, he always bore his honors with easy dignity and becoming gratitude and humility, and was on such intimate terms with the people as to win their confidence and highest respect. He was a splendid type of American manhood, always dignified, safe and conservative.

Resolved, That while we deeply mourn his death, we are not unmindful of the fact that it was his good fortune to live beyond the allotted three score years and ten, and to live a life full of noble, patriotic service to his country.

Resolved, That we point with pride to his career both as a private citizen and a public servant in the legislative halls, on the bench, and at the bar. His whole life was a busy and strenuous one for the betterment and upbuilding of the state, and while we mourn his death, it is a great pleasure and consolation to find so much in his life to commend and emulate.

Resolved, That we sympathize with the family and relatives in their affliction, yet their greatest consolation and comfort should spring from the contemplation of a long and well spent life, and the hopes that spring from the grave of a good man.

F. M. HALL.
L. W. BILLINGSLEY.
CHAS. O. WHEDON.
D. G. COURTNEY.
A. W. FIELD.

FRANK M. HALL:

When a great and good man dies, we may with profit to ourselves contemplate the lessons taught by his life. Indeed, I think it most fitting that his friends and associates should make some permanent public record of their estimate of his work and worth as a citizen, neighbor, friend and public servant.

GENERAL AMASA COBB is dead. His work here among us is finished. We shall never hear his voice in these halls again, but all that was good, all that was noble, all that was inspiring and elevating and worthy of emulation, still lives, for we are persuaded that no good thought, act or deed is ever lost.

What, then, are some of the lessons from GENERAL COBB's life that we may study with profit to ourselves? To be a great and good man does not mean that his life shall embody all the great intellectual qualities nor all of the cardinal virtues. Any one of the fundamental principles of greatness carried to an unusual degree of perfection may make a man great. The same may be said of any of the cardinal virtues. When GENERAL COBB was among us, moving to and fro in the discharge of his daily duties as a citizen, we realized that there was that in him that made him an unusual man. He had that in him and about him that differentiated him at once in a distinct manner from all other men in the community that we knew. His personality itself made him a marked man. It is true he had not those brilliant and striking intellectual qualities that at once set him apart from his fellows, and lifted him to a higher plane, and challenged the admiration and plaudits of the multitude. He had not the gift of eloquence

that lifts people to a high pitch of enthusiasm and fires them with new resolves on the burning questions of the day. He was in no sense an advocate in the usual acceptation of that term. He was not aggressive to an unusual degree, but quite the contrary, to the extent that he always shrank from a controversy, from conflict and collision. He never liked that branch of the law which carried him into the thick of the fight and the clash of the courtroom. He was in no sense a reformer. In politics he never got far in advance of his time or his party. He was not overly ambitious for places of honor or power or great wealth, and yet he enjoyed and appreciated most keenly the esteem, confidence and respect of his fellows that often marked him for political preferment and elevation. He had in his youth been deprived of substantially all of the educational facilities and advantages that are now supposed to be indispensable to character, manhood and a life of usefulness. In this regard, no one could have been more poorly equipped for a successful career than he. What, then, was it that elevated him to a high station of official trust and great responsibility?

When the electors of his district in Wisconsin were in need of an honest and able representative for the Wisconsin legislature, he was selected for the place. When there, he was selected by his peers as the best man to preside over the deliberations of the house of representatives and was accordingly chosen speaker of that body. Being speaker of the house brought him the opportunity of his life and he made the best of it.

"When the president issued his call for 75,000 volunteers, there was apathy, hesitancy and even demur, but, with a few stalwart supporters, he pushed forward Wisconsin's equipment of the quota to answer the call. He railroaded a bill through the legislature providing for the immediate transfer of the troops to the front and compelling the railroads to sidetrack all freight and passenger business for the extra trains. Then he secured an adjournment of the legislature and hurried to the country to raise volunteers. His vigorous and enthusiastic work was the chief interest in raising the Fifth Wisconsin volunteer infantry. When that regiment, afterwards the 'Iron Brigade,' the most famous of the Badger state's offering to the war, was sent to the front, he went as its first colonel.

"GENERAL COBB's record was unlike that of any other hero of those days, except the ill-fated Colonel Baker of Oregon, who kept his seat in the senate while leading his regiment to the front. It was a con-

stant strife between congress and the army as to which should have his services, and both his state and his colleagues gave him the most distinguished positions in their power to confer. His was a gallant, bold record. From June 4, 1861, to December 27, 1862, he served as the colonel of the Fifth Wisconsin, and at the battle of Williamsburg he commanded the regiment. On September 17th at Antietam he commanded Hancock's brigade.

"But while serving in the field, his appreciative and loyal supporters at home elected him to congress, an honor conferred upon him for three successive terms. Then succeeded a stressful period. GENERAL COBB was made chairman of the committee on enrolled bills of the house, and his duty in that capacity carried him personally to the president with every bill that originated in the house.

"But no sooner was congress adjourned than he returned to the field. He was brevetted a brigadier general for gallant and meritorious conduct on the field of battle at Williamsburg, Golden's Farm, Malvern Hill and Antietam.

"On September 10, 1864, he again led a regiment to the front as its colonel—this time the Forty-third Wisconsin, which he had also been instrumental in organizing and equipping. With this regiment he served until July 7, 1865, but, while in the field, was again elected to congress."

In 1870 he came to this state and became one of our prominent and leading citizens, organizing the First National Bank of Lincoln, and was its president for many years.

In 1878 he was again honored by being appointed one of the judges of this honorable court to fill a vacancy caused by the death of Honorable Chief Justice DANIEL GANTT. He was afterwards twice elected to the same position, which he filled with honor to himself and credit to the state, striving always to do exact justice to all.

Daniel Webster, speaking of Chief Justice Story, said: "Justice, sir, is the great interest of man on earth. It is the ligament which holds civilized beings and civilized nations together. Wherever her temple stands, and so long as it is duly honored, there is a foundation for social security, general happiness, and the improvement and progress of our race. And whoever labors on this edifice with usefulness and distinction, whoever clears its foundations, strengthens its pillars, adorns its entablatures, or contributes to raise its august dome still higher in the skies, connects himself, in name, and fame, and character, with that which is and must be as durable as the frame of human society."

Such, then, in brief and very imperfectly, was the public and official life of GENERAL COBB. It was not his brilliant official acts, nor his bravery on the field of battle, nor his eloquence in the halls of congress that marked him with a superiority outranking that of his fellows and won for him the confidence, respect and admiration of all who knew him. Yet on the battle field, none were braver, more courageous; on the bench, always honest, conscientious and industrious; in congress, loyally upholding the hands of our martyred Lincoln. But I shall think of GENERAL COBB, you will think of him, and those who learned to love him will think of him, not so much a man of affairs, not as a man of high intellectual attainments, not as an able and efficient public official, but as a gentle, dignified, high-minded gentleman.

I think GENERAL COBB had the best manners of any man I ever knew. If any one who knew him had been asked to name the most dignified and best mannered man that he had ever known, he would in all probability have named GENERAL AMASA COBB, and herein lay his strength and power with men and over men, and this it was that I think differentiated him from other men. GENERAL COBB's manners were an index to the whole man. Manners with him were not an empty form, a mere conventionality, a superficial heartless attitude toward his fellows, but were a part of the very fibre of the man. He was a native gentleman in the highest sense of the term. Always and on all occasions, in the drawing room, in the office, on the street, wherever he was, he was the same sweet mannered, deferential, courteous gentleman. He treated every one, both high and low, with the greatest deference and the most kindly consideration. He loved his fellow man and treated him accordingly. He recognized the rights of his fellows and exhibited this recognition by his considerate treatment. No man ever met and shook hands with GENERAL COBB without having a higher respect for and a better opinion of himself. His treatment of other people was a constant inspiration. He sympathized with the weakness and frailties of mankind because of his innate love of his fellow man. His own faith in man was so genuine and ingratiating that he made men believe in themselves. What higher and nobler service can you render to your fellow man than this? For who does not know that despair and discouragement is the gateway to ruin, while hope and self-respect lead to higher and nobler living? It was these noble qualities of head and heart, developed to an unusual degree, that made GENERAL COBB a power for good in the community.

Love for your fellow man may manifest itself in a kind word, a

gentle smile, the twinkle of the eye, the intonation of the voice, the shake of the hand, and in a hundred different ways. In the simplicity of his life, the gentleness of his manner, his kindly and considerate treatment of others, and at the same time his courtly and dignified bearing, these qualities, taken in connection with his high sense of honor and strict integrity, brought him at once into such close and intimate relations with his fellow man as to touch his life with noble resolves, new desires, and fresh ambitions. In this way, his long and useful life was a constant source of strength and inspiration to others. The power of such a life for good in a community cannot be measured or even estimated.

To be a great man, it is not necessary that one should be an Alexander Hamilton, of whom it is said "that the poise and at the same time the dash of his manner, the grooved precision of his mental processes, the fluent charm of his conversation, the grace of his demeanor, these qualities, when considered in connection with his power in the realm of affairs, make him one of the most exquisite specimens of the human species ever produced in the history of civilization." Nor a Daniel Webster, of whom it was said, "his massive mind brightened all beneath the sun." It was the high character of GENERAL COBB, rather than his great intellectual gifts, his lofty ideals and sense of justice, rather than his official acts, that made his life so rich and fruitful. It was the conduct of a life on a high moral plane—right thinking, noble acting, and simple living that made his life such a splendid contribution to civilization. The whole trend of his long and useful life was along proper lines and in the right direction. It was the *constant* and *steady* flow from his daily life of a stream of lofty patriotism, unselfish love, tender sympathy, a high and just regard for the rights of others, mingled with a *strict* integrity rather than the scintillations of a brilliant intellect or a spasmodic burst of genius or civic virtue, that made his life such a noble heritage. This is character. It is righteousness burned in the soul. It is the link which binds man to the divine. "In nobility of soul and in elevation of character, we are heirs not merely of the ages, but of eternity." "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold."

The shame of the United States senate, with several members under indictment or convicted for crimes or known to be unscrupulous corruptionists, the department officers of high standing selling official secrets as if they were produce, the men entrusted with vast trust

funds for purposes which ought to make their custody a sacred charge greedily using the money of other people for their own benefit, is due, not to the lack of capacity or even the want of opportunity, but to the fact that, when tested, their characters failed and they proved unworthy of confidence; their moral fibre was not strong enough to withstand the temptation. It is doubtful if ever in the world's history the field of honest, manly and unselfish endeavor was so rich and vast in opportunity as at the present time. In every department of human activity the cry goes up for men of character and sterling worth, men whose glory and fame spring from duty well done, men who have an abiding faith in the eternal and everlasting principles of rectitude, men with lofty ideals and the heroic courage to strive for them. The world stands amazed at the tasks of human endeavor at the present time. Truly,

"We are living, we are dwelling,
In a grand and awful time;
In an age on ages telling,
To be living is sublime."

If the fruition of our hopes are ever realized on the governmental, industrial and commercial problems now confronting us, it will be through the consecrated efforts of men, the inspiration of whose lives is: "He that saveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life shall save it."

It was my privilege to begin the study of law in the law office of Cobb & Marquette, and to be on most intimate terms of friendship with both of these men until their death. I owe them a lasting debt of gratitude. In life, I loved and honored them; in death, I cherish and revere their blessed and hallowed memory. Though they are gone from among us and their work here is finished, their noble deeds shall abide as a splendid heritage. Their spirits have entered that great court beyond, to be judged by Him who always tempers his judgment with mercy, and where they shall receive their full reward for all of their noble and unselfish deeds. Peace to their ashes and eternal felicity to their souls! In the wisdom and providence of God, such spirits do not die. They are immortal. In a spirit of reverence and humility, I lay my tribute of love and gratitude at their sacred shrines.

The inspired Victor Hugo, in the closing years of his life, speaking from a rich and varied experience, gave utterance to the following:

"I feel in myself the future life. I am rising, I know, toward the sky. The sunshine is over my head. Heaven lights me with the reflec-

tion of unknown worlds. You say the soul is nothing but the result of bodily powers; why, then, is my soul the more luminous when my bodily powers begin to fail? Winter is on my head and eternal spring in my heart. The nearer I approach the end the plainer I hear around me the immortal symphonies of the worlds which invite me. It is marvelous, yet simple. It is a fairy tale, and it is a history. For half a century I have been writing my thoughts, in prose, verse, history, philosophy, drama, romance, tradition, satire, ode, song—I have tried all, but I feel that I have not said the thousandth part of what is in me. When I go down to the grave I can say, like so many others, 'I have finished my day's work, but I cannot say I have finished my life's.' My day's work will begin the next morning. The tomb is not a blind alley; it is a thoroughfare. It closes with the twilight to open with the dawn. I improve every hour because I love this world as my fatherland. My work is only a beginning. My work is hardly above its foundation. I would be glad to see it mounting and mounting forever. The thirst for the infinite proves infinity."

The death of our departed brother is only another solemn reminder of the mutability of human life and the incompleteness of human ambition that should determine each one of us to devote himself more earnestly, more unselfishly, more worthily, to the duties we owe to our God, our country, and our fellow man.

CHARLES O. WHELDON:

AMASA COBB, in honor of whose memory the regular proceedings of this court are at this time interrupted, was born at Palestine, Crawford county, Indiana, on the 27th day of September, 1823, the tenth of a family of twelve children. In his youth he was for some time employed as a clerk in his native state, and later removed to Wisconsin, where for four years, with no marked degree of success, he engaged in lead mining. While engaged as a clerk and as a miner, and while serving as a soldier in the Mexican war, he devoted his leisure to the study of the law. On the 9th day of June, 1847, before the birth of two of the present members of this court, and before the third had arrived at the age of eighteen months, young Cobb enlisted as a private in company B, Second regiment, Illinois volunteers, in the war with Mexico. His regiment was mustered into service on the 26th day of the same month, and he served until the regiment was mustered out at Alton, Illinois, on the 20th of July, 1848. He was admitted to the bar after his military services terminated, and in 1850 was elected

district attorney for his district in the state of Wisconsin, and in 1852 was elected to serve a second term of two years. Before that term expired he was elected to the state senate, and served a term of two years. He was adjutant general of Wisconsin from 1855 to 1858. In the legislature he awakened the hostility of certain interests by opposing a scheme, which had for its object the unwarranted acquisition of public lands granted to the state by congress to aid in the construction of internal improvements. A determined but futile attempt was made to prevent his reelection to the legislature. In 1860 he was elected to the house, and when the legislature assembled in 1861 he was elected speaker. At the called session in May, 1861, he was again chosen speaker. Upon the adjournment of the called session he enlisted in the war of the rebellion, and was by the governor commissioned as colonel of the Fifth regiment, Wisconsin infantry volunteers. He served as colonel of that regiment until December, 1862, when he tendered his resignation, having been elected a member of the 38th congress. Having served one term in congress, he again enlisted and was commissioned colonel of the 43d Wisconsin. While serving in the field in 1864, he was again elected to congress and was by the secretary of war ordered to Washington in December, 1864, to take his seat. Upon the adjournment of congress, he returned to his regiment and served until the close of the war, being mustered out June 24, 1865. He was brevetted brigadier general of volunteers March 13, 1865, for gallant and distinguished services at the battles of Williamsburg, Golden's Farm, Malvern Hill and Antietam. He was again elected to congress in 1866, and again in 1868. He came to Lincoln in 1870, and engaged in the practice of law. He organized the First National Bank of this city, of which he was president until his appointment as one of the judges of this court upon the death of Judge GANTT in 1878. He was elected mayor of the city of Lincoln in 1875, and served one term. In 1878 he was by appointment made a member of this court, and by that appointment and successive elections remained a member of the court until January, 1892, when he resumed the practice of his profession, in which he remained until his death July 5, 1905.

Such is an all too brief biographical sketch of the life of GENERAL AMASA COBB. He lived during the administration of twenty-one out of twenty-five presidents of the United States. He participated in the greatest civil war of modern times, and lived to see the time when the heart-burnings and animosities of that conflict were forgotten. Rarely,

indeed, does it fall to the lot of man in the lapse from youth to age to experience so much of varied, active public life. His fidelity to every trust, his honorable discharge of every duty, endeared him to the hearts of men. His loyalty and patriotism were of that character which is the nation's hope, the guaranty of its perpetuity. American citizen, warrior, statesman, sage; green be his grave and peaceful his sleep!

LORENZO W. BILLINGSLEY:

As a testimonial and tribute to the memory of the late AMASA COBB, and evidencing the general esteem and love for his virtues, and in compliance with the mandates of this tribunal, we have submitted resolutions respecting his life, to be spread upon the records of this court.

His fame, and memory of his gracious presence, need not the voice of eulogy, for he made his own place in history "safe against the tooth of time and rasure of oblivion." There is neither time nor necessity to trace in detail his career. Simple in his manner, frugal in his habits, he maintained through a life, much of it devoted to the public service, an honorable and meager competency, content to support the dignity of official position upon the emolument which the law assigned. He had an early discipline in the stern and healthful school of poverty. His allotted period of existence for his work was distributed over more than four score years, crowned with an honorable and enduring record. He was profoundly sincere and earnest; he had, too, the generosity, tolerance, and magnanimity, which are inseparable from true nobility.

The passing out of our friend, GENERAL AMASA COBB, at his home in the golden state, was as quiet as the outgoing of the evening twilight. Forty-four years ago, at the time of supreme peril, when this nation, through its great leader, Abraham Lincoln, called upon twenty-two states to meet around her altar and defend her life, AMASA COBB was one of the first to respond to that call in the state of his residence, Wisconsin, where he raised a regiment for active service. Both from his father's and mother's loins he inherited heroic blood. As colonel, both as regimental and brigade commander, in the army of the Potomac, he led his command in many bloody battles, doing his full measure of duty as an intrepid soldier. After the civil war he gave his country faithful service in the national halls of legislation. For many years he was an honored member of this august tribunal, wherein his integrity was inflexible, and his composed and keen sense of justice

ever commanded respect. He was strong and sincere. He never evaded an issue, and never apologized for his decisions. His sympathies were bounded by no lines of creed, nor condition, nor race, but were broad as humanity. His integrity was never attacked. All who knew General Cobb bear unqualified praise of his goodness of heart, kindness of manner, amiable disposition, and courteous demeanor to all; also of firm belief in the integrity of all of his purposes.

One of the misfortunes of public men is to be misjudged by those who know them not. However, but few of the shafts of ignorance or malice fell upon him. With cheerful courage he ever discharged his duties as husband, father, friend, citizen, soldier of the republic and servant of the state. In him we saw the intrepid soul that strove for the nobility of the strong man, whom no outer circumstances could unusually depress, or exultantly unbalance; the man who is not unduly elated over success, or dismal over failure; who is not at the mercy of circumstances, sad today, because things are troublesome, and joyful tomorrow, because they are easy; striving always to be balanced, strong, serene, composed and just. If troubles did come upon him, as they did more than once, and particularly one, that was sudden, horrible and appalling, his mind reposed in the Eternal, where no trouble comes. If friends and earthly possessions were lost, he reverted to that wealth of wisdom and spiritual life that could not be taken from him. His higher self has secured freedom from the limitations, the pains and disabilities of the body. We do not think of our friend as dead, unconscious dust; but as an eternal conscious spirit, on a higher mission, helpfully strengthening us for better lives here and in the great beyond by memories of his noble deeds. When his sun of life was setting, and he was confronted by hopeless invalidism, his words and every action were those of calm deliberation. The memory of his character is a valued heritage for posterity.

ALBERT WATKINS, SR.:

It is a social duty as well as a personal pleasure to the generous minded to acknowledge and portray the qualities that have distinguished our fellow men, and more especially the more distinguished among our fellows. The function which now engages us, in memory of a public man, is both subjective and objective in its effect, in that it awakens and stimulates our otherwise dull or dormant sentiment of philanthropic appreciation and shows to others an object lesson of

life—an appraisal of mental and moral capacity manifest in character and effective in achievement.

It is meet, therefore, to briefly examine the character and career of the subject of this most proper ceremony, and disclose their salient features. But, first, let us note how like an open book the characters of men are read by those about them; how like a city set on a hill, and which cannot be hid, the world at large discerns the minds and motives of its individual components. In all the walks and relations of our lives "there's a chiel amang us takin' notes." This consideration lends some special fitness to my contribution to this service of honor and regard; for I was familiar with JUDGE COBB's reputation as he made it during the first phase of his career, extending through twenty-five years in his, and my, Wisconsin home. I might, perhaps, more accurately say, his first career; for he had two distinct courses of life; and enforced labor, self-denial and even hardship were the firm foundation of the staying qualities which were the safe framework of his more than half a century's active and successful life.

Forty years ago lawyers were easily leaders in the social organization; and this was especially true in the rural or less cosmopolitan communities. In each country town the worthy lawyer was "guide, philosopher and friend" to a large formal and informal clientele; and, in lesser measure and degree, this is still true. There is no more useful, honorable or enviable social relation than that of the "country" lawyer who enjoys the confidence of his community. In these earlier days the names of the leaders of the bar were household words throughout the county, and their character and characteristics were familiarly known, discussed and graded. But by the general dispersion of intelligence, once a monopoly of the "learned professions," and the now easy dominance of business over our lives, lawyers have become chiefs, guides and defenders of commercial enterprises. Thus, as a boy, long before I personally knew JUDGE COBB, I right well knew his public rating; and these popular estimates, though sometimes superficial, were in general true and fair. But to fill the public measure a legal leader must then have been clad in shining armor with a lance that was swift and keen, and with versatile tongue.

"E'en though vanquished, he could argue still."

But JUDGE COBB was of the Sir Galahad, rather than the Dalgetty type, and the sober color both of his outward equipment and his inward qualities scarcely matched the more glittering gifts of his competitors for public favor.

In his first career, JUDGE COBB successfully graduated from those graded vicissitudes which are a common, and often cruel, test of fitness for survival, and so the common precursor or cause of the self-dependent boy's rounded and successful experience. First, laborer and "prospector" in the lead mines, and some time country school teacher, now and then snatching a fugitive hour for study of the law, his intended profession; then justice of the peace, soldier in the Mexican war, twice member of the legislative assembly, adjutant general of Wisconsin, thrice in succession member of the national house of representatives, and during this last service organizer and head of one, and afterwards at the head of another, regiment of volunteers of the civil war.

This, truly, was in itself a career varied and rounded, and such as only the few possess capacity to achieve or courage to encounter. And, then, after a quarter century's active experience in pioneer state-building, and in defense of the structure, attracted by the prospectus of the novelty fiat capital city of Nebraska, he goes forth to the second west, there adventuring and successfully running a second course of life and taking an important part in the structural work of the state and its capital.

In this formative stage, society and public affairs especially were, of course, largely in the hands, or under the influence of, the flotsam and jetsam, which advanced, or rather retreated, on the western stream of emigration, anon clinging temporarily to some likely harbor, or all but hopelessly and aimlessly stranded on its shores, to take, it might be, a half-adventurous, half-confident step in a new start with the more substantial and resolute pioneer home-builders, but with the likely chance, after a brief and mutually unprofitable sojourn, of being again caught by the ever flowing, fascinating tide and moved on to new, but similar scenes, fortunes and uses, until the farthest of the progressive western "openings" and its last opportunities are again misused or altogether missed. JUDGE COBB's substantial capital of character, experience and property, reenforced by such special qualities as deserved public confidence, served in some sort as ballast and rudder to the crude and rude craft which is the beginning of each ship of state, and as a check upon the excesses which especially marked and marred the beginnings of this commonwealth and, peculiarly, of its capital town. In any country but ours, I think, a man of JUDGE COBB's position and prestige would have put them to advantageous use in the well-developed field of binding beauty and richness, where they were acquired, and

would have been of most effect. But was not this repeated adventure in pioneering and state-building prompted by the still lurking spirit of our English forbears which ever impelled them to the ends of the earth, subduing, colonizing, constructing and, distinctively among all peoples, holding against all competitors and all vicissitudes. And is it not to this restless and resistless inheritance of the vikings of our prairie main that we owe the mighty, the marvelous, the magical subjugation and regeneration of its unpromising expanse? JUDGE COBB'S unusually long and steady occupation of the public eye must be attributed to unusual qualities of the recipient of the implied confidence and high regard. What were these qualities? First of all, I think, he was level both in his mental and moral faculties and processes. It may not be said that he was a brilliant lawyer or soldier or a profound or keenly discriminating jurist; and yet it may well be that he was more useful than if he had been both brilliant and profound. His generally safe judgment, and upon the bench, especially, the fact that his awards were reached through honest and painstaking intent to find justice and do equity, won and deserved public recognition, confidence and esteem and constituted his chief judicial virtue. From the first, in his Nebraska practice, he professionally served powerful and influential corporations; but he served without subserviency; and in a time of common suspicion and too common dereliction he was not suspected of carrying corporate allegiance to the bench or other public function. By an unusual fealty duty was his dictator and the sword and shield of his moral stability. There were more brilliant and, in a sense, abler men at the local bar where his first career began and closed, and yet in the long run he distanced those apparently more favored rivals. "If the flights of Dryden are higher, Pope continues longer on the wing. If of Dryden's fire the blaze is brighter, of Pope's the heat is more regular and constant." Serene and shrewd common sense were a safe substitute for those more showy qualities and a sure retreat for wise deliberation and judgment. "It is not the billows, but the calm level of the sea, from which all heights and depths are measured." Throughout his long period of official life, during which he must have breathed constantly the atmosphere of intrigue and finesse, he remained less tainted by them than most men subject to like environment. Though his public acts and their motives might be criticised, his rectitude was, I believe, never seriously questioned, and he emerged from his first overt public temptation with the sobriquet of "Honest Cobb." In pres-

ent contrasting characteristics of public men, this seems indeed a proud and precious legacy to his memory. Not the least of JUDGE COBB's virtues, it seems to me, was that he was unused "The applause of listening senates to command." Though he escaped the American vice of speech-making, because he was unobtrusive, he was unobtrusive partly because he lacked the speech-making gift; and his considerable and continued success as a public man, where public life is so largely based on the titillation and the tricks of talk, is the more remarkable. Certainly not the least, and perhaps the greatest, of JUDGE COBB's virtues was that he was a gentleman, and particularly in the true or unconventional sense. The suavity and graciousness of his demeanor were spontaneous and persistent, and yet he doubtless appreciated their great value in the equipment for competitive struggle so well as not to discourage their manifestation. They were as persistent and seemed as natural as Nebraska sunshine, and lent a charming grace to a perennially dignified deportment. These gifts of demeanor served him in good stead from the first. One of those typical Norwegians who spring from a cobbler's bench to affluence and leadership, and who was an early settler in JUDGE COBB's county in Wisconsin, always asked kindly about him on my visits to the old home. The last time I saw him, he told me that in 1846 JUDGE COBB came to his shop in a country community, not far from Mineral Point, and ordered a pair of boots, saying that he needed them before beginning to teach the coming term of the district school, but would not be able to pay for them until pay day came. "Did he get the boots without the pay?" I asked. "Sure! His face was good enough for that," was the ready answer.

The sympathetic charity, the serenity, the contentment, the moral excellence of JUDGE COBB's long life illustrate the futility and unwisdom of prescribing one set of beliefs or ethical sanctions for our guidance through this reputed vale of tears; for though he discarded dogma and clung to no creed, he yet walked uprightly all the days of a serene and sunny life, finding God in the supreme order of the universe and serving Him in loyal observance of its laws; and when the shadow of the dark unknown descended upon him, he was still courageous and content, fearing no evil. Men by millions, and of as many minds, seek and approach the highest goal of life along all the radii of the all-comprehensive circle of beliefs or non-beliefs, as they may be denoted by superficial systems of nomenclature. Faith is an attitude, a condition, common to all, though in differing degree. Faiths are con-

ditions precedent, prescribed and often proscriptive rules. Of faith JUDGE COBB possessed a plentitude of faiths a paucity. And his faith was not of that kind.

"That lives in thought
On comforts which this world postpones;
That idly looks on life and groans
And shuns the lessons love has taught;
Which deems that after three score years,
Love, peace and joy become its due;
That timid wishes should come true
In some safe spot, untouched by fears."

But he the rather

"Looked on life
As present chance to prove his heart,
As time to take the better part
And stronger grow by constant strife.
* * * * *
So bent that they he loves shall find
This earth a home both rich and fair,
That he is careless to be heir
To all inheritance behind."

But though living, aspiring and striving in and for this world and not averse to gaining a fair share of its bounties, yet his desires and activities were normal, employing the moderate means to the moderate end, and, though now contemned and despised, yet a wholesome example when pernicious precept excites to the pernicious practice of abnormal strenuousness, and as end rather than means. Baneful example, encouraged by preaching of those who sit in high places, leads our youth and even our maturer manhood to affect and emulate the overstrained life, to take for pattern the monster rather than the normal man, and for criterion the monstrosity rather than normal achievement. JUDGE COBB loved, without ostentation, the simple life, sparing its often rapid vaunting. Does not the summing up of JUDGE COBB's serene, moderate, wholesome and yet influential and effective life at least beckon us back from this misled and dangerous tendency to normal and healthier aspiration, effort and conditions?

CHIEF JUSTICE HOLCOMB, on behalf of the court, responded as follows:

It is altogether fitting and proper that we pause, while engaged in the ordinary business of the court, to take note of the fact that one who has practiced at the bar and adorned the bench in times past has joined

that vast silent throng in the great beyond; to pay our tribute of respect of his memory, and to make suitable acknowledgement of the services he rendered to the nation, the state and his fellow men, during a long and honorable career. We join heartily in what has been so eloquently and aptly said by those well qualified to speak concerning the character and lifework of our departed brother. The sentiments expressed in the resolutions presented, and in the addresses delivered in respect thereto, find a responsive chord in our hearts, and we beg to be permitted to adopt them as our own. In view of all that has been so well and appropriately said by those who, because of intimate social and professional relations with JUDGE COBB in his lifetime, are best qualified to testify to his virtues and accomplishments in life, it seems hardly necessary or proper that we, less well acquainted, should attempt to add anything thereto.

JUDGE AMASA COBB belonged distinctively to that class of pioneer citizens, now rapidly passing away, who, with prophetic vision at an early period of the state's history, foresaw its wonderful possibilities, severed the ties of home and earlier associations, in order to help build a new commonwealth and establish new homes amidst new surroundings for themselves and their families. He has, by his wisdom, example and industry, materially contributed to the cause of good government, the reign of law and order, and the well-being of society. To him and those who labored with him in those early days, amidst crude surroundings and unsettled conditions, we of a younger generation are greatly indebted for the blessings we are permitted to enjoy, without the hardships they endured, and for which our hearts must ever respond with a deep-felt sense of gratitude. JUDGE COBB fought for his country's cause on the field of battle, with fidelity, winning deserved distinction because of his patriotism, courage and valor; and in no less degree in the civil affairs of life, in important positions of trust and responsibility, he served his fellow man faithfully and efficiently, so that as to him it may be truly said: "Peace hath her victories no less renowned than war."

But a short time after the adoption of the present constitution of our state he was appointed a member of this court to fill a vacancy caused by the death of Judge GANTT. It became his duty to assist in the interpretation of that instrument, and to promulgate rules whereby its provisions might be properly construed. For nearly fourteen years, beginning in 1878, he, as a member of this court, served the state

with rare wisdom and fidelity, bringing to his work the ripened judgment and learning of years of experience, observation and study which had preceded his elevation to the bench. His opinions are found in the official reports beginning with the seventh volume and ending with the thirty-second. The work he and his associates were called to do was, in many instances, for the first time, to announce a principle of substantive law, or a rule of practice, which should serve as a precedent and a guide for all those who should come after them. He and they in truth laid the foundation of our judicial system, broad and deep and on an enduring basis. He was not only a pioneer citizen of the state, but a pioneer in the exploration and working out of the basic plan of a jurisprudence that would meet the requirements and needs of the people of a rapidly developing commonwealth, and stand for the protection of life, liberty and the rights of property of all, so that in truth the state's motto, "Equality before the law," should be a reality.

I knew JUDGE COBB only as one would who appeared as a practitioner at the bar of the court of which he was one of the members. My impressions were that he was a person of courtly bearing, kind and courteous to all, and one who would not intentionally cause offense to any and who was considerate in his intercourse with all. His opinions, if I may judge of them, disclose diligent research and investigation in a conscientious effort to ascertain wherein lay truth and justice. He, if I judge him correctly, cautiously weighed and thoroughly considered every legal proposition upon which he was required to pass judgment before reaching a conclusion, but, when once formed, on full investigation and mature deliberation, was adhered to with more than ordinary tenacity. He strove for the ascertainment of the right and then declared it courageously and unfalteringly. He regarded the law as it is said to be, the perfection of reasoning, and stated with fullness the reasons why he was impelled to the decision announced. In what he did and what he accomplished, he measured well up to the higher standard of human attainments. He lived an exemplary and useful life, one that we delight to honor. His life has been well spent, and we may, with reason, hope that he has received the welcome call of "Well done, good and faithful servant." He had lived to a ripe old age, and had reached that state in life whereof it has been said that the nearer one approaches death he seems as it were to be getting sight of land, and, at length, after a long voyage, to be just coming into harbor. His

memory will yield its fragrance for years to come, for "Only the actions of the just smell sweet and blossom in their dust."

The resolutions of respect to the memory of JUDGE COBB, which have been presented by the committee, and the addresses we have listened to, will, of course, be made a matter of record in the journals of the court, and at a suitable time published in one of the volumes of its official reports.

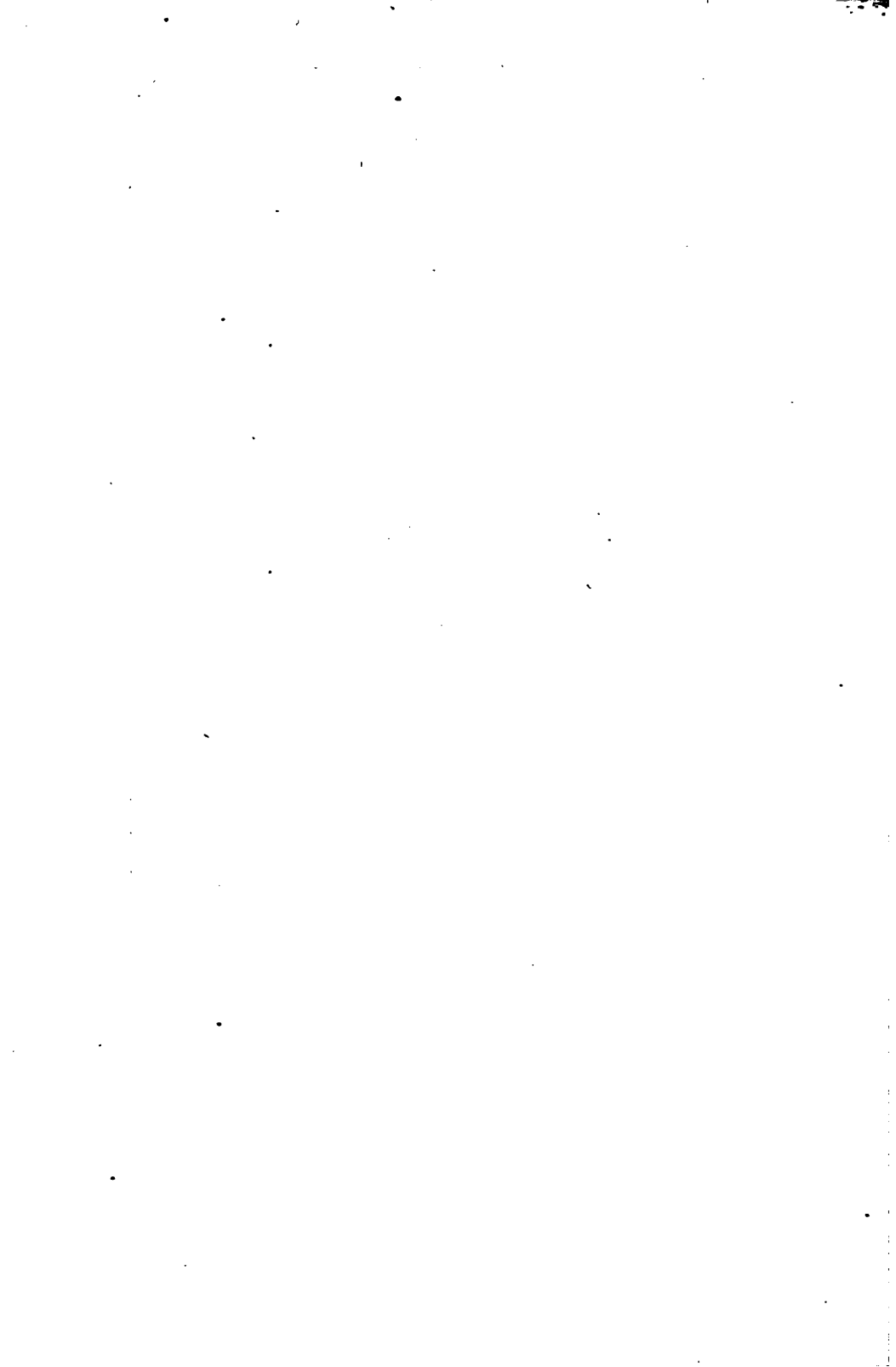


TABLE OF CASES REPORTED.

	PAGE
Adair County Bank v. Forrey.....	811
Adams County, Holthaus v.....	861
Ainsworth v. Roubal.....	723
Aldritt v. Fleischauer.....	66
Alpe, in re.....	353
Allison v. Fidelity Mutual Fire Ins. Co.....	366
Alperson v. Whalen.....	680
America Bonding & Trust Co., Quist v.....	692
Anderson, Larson v.	361
Anthes v. Schroeder	172
Apking v. Hoefer	325
Armstrong, Winston v.	604
Arnout v. Chadwick.....	620
Axelson, Ford v.....	92
 Bailey, Yates v.	 734
Baker v. McDonald	595
Bank of Staplehurst, Yates v.....	734
Bankers Union of the World v. Mixon.....	36
Beatrice, City of, v. Forbes.....	125
Beer v. Wisner	437
Bevard v. Lincoln Traction Co.....	802
Billingsley, Tootle-Weakley Millinery Co. v.....	531
Blackburn, Nebraska Moline Plow Co. v.....	246
Blacker v. State.....	671
Blum, Schroeder v.	60
Boesen, Omaha Street R. Co. v.....	764
Boettcher v. Lancaster County.....	148
Brandon v. Jensen	569
Brittain, Lee v.	591
Brooks v. Stanley	858
Brownfield v. Union P. R. Co.....	440
Buchtel, Continental Casualty Co. v.....	823
Burleigh v. Palmer	122
 Caster v. Scheuneman	 243
Chadwick, Arnout v.	620
Chamberlain Banking House, Johnson County v.....	549
Chapman v. Chapman.....	388

	PAGE
Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Dowhower.....	600
Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co., Hadacheck v.....	385
Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Harley.....	462
Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Mitchell.....	563
Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Todd.....	712
Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co., Walters v.....	551
Chicago & N. W. R. Co. v. State.....	77
Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co. v. Kerr.....	1
City of Beatrice v. Forbes.....	125
City of Lexington v. Fleharty.....	626
City of Omaha, Hart v.....	836
City of Omaha v. Kochem.....	718
City of Omaha v. Lewis.....	184
City of Omaha, Richardson v.....	297
City of Plattsmouth v. Murphy.....	749
Clifford v. Thun	831
Clingan v. Dixon County.....	807
Cohen v. Hawkins	249
Conley, Pochin v.	429
Connolly v. State	340
Continental Casualty Co. v. Buchtel.....	823
Coppom v. Forman	275
Crites v. State	687
Davenport, Hair v.	117
Davidson Bros. Marble Co., Teetzel v.....	529
Day, McKibbin v.	424
Delane, Smith v.	594
Dixon County, Clingan v.....	807
Dodd v. Kemnitz	634
Dowhower, Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v.....	600
Drexel, State v.	776
Eager v. Eager	827, 830
Emerick, Johnson v.	303
Farley v. McBride	49
Fickenscher, Union P. R. Co. v.....	497, 507
Fidelity Mutual Fire Ins. Co., Allison v.....	366
Field v. Lincoln Gas & Electric Light Co.....	423
Field v. Lincoln Traction Co.....	418
Field v. Nebraska Telephone Co.....	419
Fink, State v.	641
First Nat. Bank of Mendota, May v.....	251
First Nat. Bank of Plattsmouth v. Gibson.....	232, 236
First State Bank v. Stephens Bros.....	616
Fiscus v. Wilson	444

TABLE OF CASES REPORTED.

xxxiii

	PAGE
Fitch v. Martin	538
Fitzgerald, Lancaster County v.	433
Flehart, City of Lexington v.	626
Fleischauer, Aldritt v.	66
Forbes, City of Beatrice v.	125
Ford v. Axelson	92
Forman, Coppom v.	275
Forrey, Adair County Bank v.	811
Fryer v. Fryer	845
Galloway v. Rochester Loan & Banking Co.	695
Galusha, State v.	188
Garvey, Riiff v.	522
Gibson, First Nat. Bank of Plattsmouth v.	232, 236
Grand Lodge, Order of Sons of Herman, Soehner v.	399
Gress, Rodenbrock v.	409
Griffin, Rieck v.	102
Gutschow v. Washington County	378, 794, 800
Hackney, Hargreaves Bros. v.	700
Hadacheck v. Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co.	385
Hair v. Davenport	117
Halter v. State	757
Hanlon, Shreck v.	264
Hanson v. Nathan	288
Hargreaves Bros. v. Hackney	700
Harley, Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v.	462
Hart v. City of Omaha	836
Hart v. Saunders	818
Hase v. State	493
Hawkins, Cohen v.	249
Hayden, Horton v.	339
Hayward, Johnson v.	157, 166
Heaton v. Wireman	817
Hendee, State v.	847
Hensel v. Hoffman	382
Herring, Hornung v.	637
Hiett v. Hiett	96
Higbee v. State	331
Hoefer, Apking v.	325
Hoffman, Hensel v.	382
Holthaus v. Adams County	861
Hornung v. Herring	637
Horton v. Hayden	339
Hubert v. State	220, 226
Habler v. Johnson-McLean Co.	840

	PAGE
Hunter, Morrison v.	559
Hurley, Shebley v.	81
Ingersoll, Webber v.	393
In re Algae	353
Jensen, Brandon v.	569
Jessen v. Willhite	603
Johnson v. Emerick	303
Johnson v. Hayward	157, 166
Johnson Co., McGinnis v.	356
Johnson County v. Chamberlain Banking House.....	549
Johnson-McLean Co., Hubler v.	840
Jones Nat. Bank, Yates v.	734
Kansas City & O. R. Co. v. State.....	363
Kemnitz, Dodd v.	634
Kerr, Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co. v.....	1
Kerr, Wall v.	603
Kimsey, Templin v.	614
Kinhead v. Turgeon	573, 580
Knight v. Lancaster County.....	82
Kocher, City of Omaha v.	718
Koslowski v. Newman	704
Ladeaux v. State	19
Lamb v. Wilson	72
Lancaster County, Boettcher v.	143
Lancaster County v. Fitzgerald	433
Lancaster County, Knight v.	82
Lancaster County v. State	211, 215
Larson v. Anderson	361
Lee v. Brittain	591
Lewis, City of Omaha v.	184
Lexington, City of, v. Fleharty.....	626
Lexington Bank v. Phenix Ins. Co.....	548
Lincoln Gas & Electric Light Co., Field v.....	423
Lincoln Gas & Electric Light Co. v. Thomas.....	257
Lincoln Gas & Electric Light Co., Woods v.....	526
Lincoln Traction Co., Bevard v.	302
Lincoln Traction Co., Field v.....	418
Lincoln Traction Co. v. Shepherd	269, 374
Linton, Morris v.	411
Lompe, Prante v.	210
Loverene & Browne Co., Miller v.	557
Lungren, West v.	106
McBride, Farley v.	49

TABLE OF CASES REPORTED.

xxxv

	PAGE
McDonald, Baker v.	595
McGinnis v. Johnson Co.	356
McGuire, State v.	769
McKibbin v. Day	424
McNeill, Morrill v.	291
McNish v. State	261
Main v. Sherman County	155
Malone, State v.	645
Martin, Fitch v.	538
Masilonka, Stull v.	309, 322
May v. First Nat. Bank of Mendota	251
Mellor, State v.	350
Miles v. State	684
Miller v. Loverene & Browne Co.	557
Mitchell, Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v.	563
Modern Woodmen of America v. Plummer	711
Morrill v. McNeill	291
Morris v. Linton	411
Morrison v. Hunter	559
Mixon, Bankers Union of the World v.	36
Murphy, City of Plattsmouth v.	749
Nathan, Hanson v.	288
Nebraska Moline Plow Co. v. Blackburn	246
Nebraska Telephone Co., Field v.	419
Newman, Koslowski v.	704
New Omaha Thomson-Houston Electric Light Co., Powell v.	280
Ogill, State v.	669, 670
Omaha, City of, Hart v.	836
Omaha, City of, v. Kochem	718
Omaha, City of, v. Lewis	184
Omaha, City of, Richardson v.	297
Omaha Street R. Co. v. Boesen	764
Palmer, Burleigh v.	122
Palmer v. Sawyer	108
Phelps v. Wolf	44
Phenix Ins. Co., Lexington Bank v.	548
Pierce, Ruby v.	754
Plummer, Modern Woodmen of America v.	711
Pochin v. Conley	429
Powell v. New Omaha Thomson-Houston Electric Light Co.	280
Plasters, State v.	652
Platner, State Electro-Medical Institute v.	23
Plattsmouth, City of, v. Murphy	749
Prante v. Lompe	210

	PAGE
Quist v. American Bonding & Trust Co.....	692
Ralph, Robinson & Co. v.	55
Richardson v. City of Omaha	297
Rieck v. Griffin	102
Riiff v. Garvey	522
Robinson & Co. v. Ralph	55
* Rochester Loan & Banking Co., Gallaway v.....	695
Rodenbrock v. Gress	409
Rosenberg v. Sprecher	176, 183
Roubal, Ainsworth v.....	723
Ruby v. Pierce	754
Saunders, Hart v.....	818
Sawyer, Palmer v.	108
Scheuneman, Caster v.	243
Schroeder, Anthes v.	172
Schroeder v. Blum	60
Searle, State v.	486
Sheibley v. Hurley	31
Shepherd, Lincoln Traction Co. v.	369, 374
Sherman County, Main v.....	155
Shreck v. Hanlon	264
Smith v. Delane	594
Soehner v. Grand Lodge, Order of Sons of Herman.....	399
Spencer v. Wilson	459
Sprecher, Rosenberg v.	176, 183
Stanley, Brooks v.	858
State, Blacker v.	671
State, Chicago & N. W. R. Co. v.....	77
State, Connolly v.	340
State, Crites v.	687
State, Halter v.	757
State, Hase v.	493
State, Higbee v.	331
State, Hubert v.	220, 226
State, Ladeaux v.	19
State, Lancaster County v.	211, 215
State, McNish v.	261
State, Miles v.	684
State, State Electro-Medical Institute v.	40
State, Turley v.	471
State, Young v.	346
State, ex rel. Adair, v. Drexel	776
State, ex rel. Bankers Union of the World, v. Searle.....	486
State, ex rel. Donnell, v. O'Fall.....	670

TABLE OF CASES REPORTED.

xxxvii

	PAGE
State, ex rel. Grove, v. McGuire.....	769
State, ex rel. Hensley, v. Plasters	652
State, ex rel. Kearney County, Kansas City & O. R. Co. v.....	868
State, ex rel. Mellor, v. Grow	850
State, ex rel. Pentzer, v. Malone.....	645
State, ex rel. Polk, v. Galusha	188
State, ex rel. Saunders, v. Fink	641
State, ex rel. Slabaugh, v. Vinsonhaler.....	675
State, ex rel. Stephens, v. Hendee	847
State, ex rel. Welsh, v. Ofill	669
State Electro-Medical Institute v. Platner.....	23
State Electro-Medical Institute v. State.....	40
Stephens Bros., First State Bank v.	616
Stewart, Wendt v.	855
Stroemer v. Van Orsdel	132, 143
Stull v. Masilonka	309, 322
 Taylor, Weckerly v.....	84, 772
Teetzel v. Davidson Bros. Marble Co.....	529
Templin v. Kimsey	614
Thomas, Lincoln Gas & Electric Light Co. v.....	257
Thun, Clifford v.	831
Todd, Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v.....	712
Tootle-Weakley Millinery Co. v. Billingsley.....	531
Turgeon, Kinkaid v.	573, 580
Turley v. State	471
 Union P. R. Co., Brownfield v.	440
Union P. R. Co. v. Fickenscher.....	497, 507
Union P. R. Co., Weatherford v.	229
Utica Bank, Yates v.	734
 Van Orsdel, Stroemer v.	132, 143
Vinsonhaler, State v.	675
 Wall v. Kerr	603
Walters v. Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co.....	551
Washington County, Gutschow v.....	378, 794, 800
Weatherford v. Union P. R. Co.....	229
Webber v. Ingersoll	398
Weckerly v. Taylor.....	84, 772
Wendt v. Stewart	855
West v. Lungren	105
Whalen, Alperson v.	680
Willhite, Jessen v.	608
Willow Springs Irrigation District v. Wilson.....	269
Wilson, Fiscus v.	444
Wilson, Lamb v.	73

xxxviii TABLE OF CASES REPORTED.

	PAGE
Wilson, Spencer v.	459
Wilson, Willow Springs Irrigation District v.	269
Winston v. Armstrong	604
Wireman, Heaton v.	317
Wisner, Beer v.	437
Wolff, Phelps v.	44
Woods v. Lincoln Gas & Electric Light Co.	526
Yates v. Bailey	734
Yates v. Bank of Staplehurst	734
Yates v. Jones Nat. Bank.	734
Yates v. Utica Bank.	734
Young v. State	346

CASES CITED BY THE COURT.

CASES MARKED * ARE OVERRULED IN THIS VOLUME.

CASES MARKED † ARE DISTINGUISHED IN THIS VOLUME.

	PAGE
Adams v. Grand Lodge A. O. U. W., 66 Neb. 289.....	407
Adams v. Pease, 2 Conn. 481.....	575
Affholder v. State, 51 Neb. 91.....	683
Albers v. Kozeluh, 68 Neb. 522.....	323
Albertson v. State, 9 Neb. 429.....	218
Alexander v. Shaffer, 38 Neb. 812.....	834
Allen v. Cowan, 96 Mo. 193.....	154
Allen v. Rushforth, 72 Neb. 907.....	599
Alpers v. Hunt, 86 Cal. 78.....	27
Alter v. Covey, 45 Neb. 508.....	540
Anderson v. City of Albion, 64 Neb. 280.....	721
Anheuser-Busch Brewing Ass'n v. Peterson, 41 Neb. 897.....	615
Anketel v. Converse, 17 Ohio St. 11.....	166
Armstrong v. Mayer, 60 Neb. 423.....	650
Asbury v. Hicklin, 181 Mo. 658.....	710
Atchison, T. & S. F. R. Co. v. Morrow, 4 Kan. App. 199.....	468
Attorney General v. City of Eau Claire, 37 Wis. 400.....	665
Attorney General v. Detroit Common Council, 58 Mich. 213.....	792
Aultman v. Waddle, 40 Kan. 195.....	142
Ayers v. Watson, 132 U. S. 394.....	768
Bailey v. Mosher, 63 Fed. 488.....	737
Bailey v. Mosher, 74 Fed. 15, 95 Fed. 223.....	738
Bainbridge v. Sherlock, 29 Ind. 364.....	576
Baker v. Gillan, 68 Neb. 368.....	410
Baker v. Kloster, 41 Neb. 890.....	712
Baker v. Union Stock Yards Nat. Bank, 63 Neb. 801.....	615
Ballou v. Sherwood, 32 Neb. 666.....	618
Bank of Maywood v. Estate of McAllister, 56 Neb. 188.....	416, 744
Barber Asphalt Paving Co. v. Botsford, 56 Kan. 532.....	142
Barker v. Davies, 47 Neb. 78.....	599
Barnes v. State, 40 Neb. 545.....	338
Barney v. Keokuk, 94 U. S. 324.....	576, 585
Barry v. Schmidt, 57 Wis. 172.....	171

	PAGE
Barry v. Wachosky, 57 Neb. 534.....	615, 814
Bartlett v. Pickersgill, 1 Eden. (Eng.), 515.....	163
Batchelder v. Moore, 42 Cal. 412.....	692
Baum v. Sweeney, 5 Wash. 712.....	380
Baxter v. State, 10 Wis. *454.....	216
Beal v. Polhemus, 67 Mich. 130.....	142
Beals v. Western Union Telegraph Co., 53 Neb. 601.....	743
Bear v. Koenigstein, 16 Neb. 67.....	86
Beckett v. State, 49 Neb. 210.....	691
Beckman v. Meyer, 75 Mo. 333.....	114
Beebe v. Latimer, 59 Neb. 305.....	1
Beloit v. Morgan, 7 Wall. (U. S.) 619.....	234
Bennett v. Kroth, 37 Kan. 235.....	156
Bennett v. Otto, 68 Neb. 652.....	592
Bergeron v. State, 53 Neb. 752.....	338
Bissel v. Fletcher, 19 Neb. 725.....	577
Bissell v. Spring Valley Township, 124 U. S. 225.....	743
Blair v. Austin, 71 Neb. 401.....	409
Blodgett v. Utley, 4 Neb. 25.....	755
Blum v. Gaines, 57 Tex. 119.....	114
Board of Education v. Hobbs, 8 Okla. 293.....	264
Boden v. Mier, 71 Neb. 191.....	323
Boldt v. First Nat. Bank, 59 Neb. 283.....	90
Boone v. Chiles, 10 Pet. (U. S.) 176.....	165
†Bouvier v. Stricklett, 40 Neb. 792.....	573
Boyd v. State, 19 Neb. 128.....	691
Boyer v. Clark, 3 Neb. 161.....	536
Boyles v. Boyles, 37 Ia. 592.....	571
Bradley v. Slater, 50 Neb. 682.....	180
Bradley v. Slater, 55 Neb. 334.....	831
Bradley & Co. v. Basta, 71 Neb. 169.....	58
Bradshaw v. City of Omaha, 1 Neb. 16.....	666
Braithwaite v. State, 28 Neb. 832.....	336
Braswell v. Morehead, 45 N. Car. 26.....	436
Braxon v. Bressler, 64 Ill. 488.....	575
Bremsen v. Engler, 49 N. Y. Super. Ct. 172.....	140
Briggs v. Spaulding, 141 U. S. 132.....	739
Brown v. Brown, 10 Neb. 349.....	830
Brown v. Brown, 91 Ky. 639.....	726
Brown v. Buzan, 24 Ind. 194.....	665
Brown v. Campbell, 100 Cal. 635.....	731
Brown v. People, 39 Ill. 407.....	352
Brown v. Watts, 1 Taunt. (Eng.) 353.....	414
Buchanan v. Edmisten, 1 Neb. (Unof.) 429.....	323
Bucklin v. Strickler, 32 Neb. 602.....	594
Buerstetta v. Bank, 57 Neb. 504.....	831

CASES CITED BY THE COURT.

xli

	PAGE
Bugg v. Summer, 1 McM. (S. Car.) *333.....	729
Bullock v. Wilson, 2 Port. (Ala.) 436.....	576
Burden v. Sheridan, 36 Ia. 125.....	159
Burlington & M. R. R. Co. v. Saunders County, 9 Neb. 507.....	783
Burns v. Glens Falls, S. H. & Ft. E. St. R. Co., 38 N. Y. Supp. 856..	14
Burt v. Place, 6 Cow. (N. Y.) 430.....	27
Bush v. Collins, 35 Kan. 535.....	248
Bush v. State, 47 Neb. 642.....	342
Calvert v. State, 34 Neb. 616.....	685
Camp v. Bates, 11 Conn. *51.....	436
Campbell v. Campbell, 73 Ia. 482.....	100
Carr v. Luscher, 35 Neb. 318.....	358
Carr v. State, 23 Neb. 749.....	481
Carrall v. State, 53 Neb. 421.....	342
Carson v. Blazer, 2 Binn. (Pa.) 475.....	576
Carter v. Palmer, 1 Bligh (Eng.) 397.....	163
Chadbourn v. Rackliff, 30 Me. 354.....	571
Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Bigley, 1 Neb. (Unof.) 225.....	556
Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Emmert, 53 Neb. 237.....	563
Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Featherly, 64 Neb. 323.....	128
Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Landauer, 36 Neb. 640.....	130
Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Olsen, 70 Neb. 559.....	556
Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Roberts, 3 Neb. (Unof.) 425.....	469
Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Schalkopf, 54 Neb. 448.....	810
Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Spirk, 51 Neb. 167.....	6
Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co. v. Farwell, 59 Neb. 544.....	259
Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co. v. McCarty, 49 Neb. 475.....	842
Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co. v. Shaw, 63 Neb. 380.....	71
Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co. v. Sturm, 174 U. S. 710.....	386
Chicago Union Traction Co. v. Mommsen, 107 Ill. App. 353.....	768
Christy v. Board of Supervisors, 39 Cal. 3.....	656, 663
Citizens State Bank v. Nore, 67 Neb. 69.....	26
City of Friend v. Burleigh, 53 Neb. 674.....	628
City of Kearney v. Downing, 59 Neb. 549.....	752
City of Lincoln v. Gillilan, 18 Neb. 114.....	809
City of Lincoln v. Pirner, 59 Neb. 634.....	720
City of Los Angeles v. Mellus, 59 Cal. 444.....	743
City of New Orleans v. Robira, 42 La. Ann. 1098.....	665
Clark v. Cambridge & A. I. & I. Co., 45 Neb. 798.....	578
Clark v. Koenig, 36 Neb. 572.....	112
Clough v. State, 7 Neb. 320.....	480
*Cochran v. Cochran, 42 Neb. 612.....	391
Cohen v. Dry Dock E. B. & B. R. Co., 69 N. Y. 170.....	14
Commonwealth v. Hanley, 9 Pa. St. 513.....	667
Cook v. City of Anamosa, 66 Ia. 427.....	721

	PAGE
Oooley v. Golden, 117 Mo. 33.....	582
Cooper v. City of Milwaukee, 97 Wis. 458.....	721
Cooper v. Cooper, 24 Ohio St. 488.....	114
County of Douglas v. Timme, 32 Neb. 272.....	655
County of Hall v. Thomsen, 63 Neb. 787.....	559
County of Lancaster v. Lincoln Packing Co., 5 Neb. (Unof.) 521..	289
County of St. Clair v. Lovington, 23 Wall. (U. S.) 46.....	577
County of Valley v. Robinson, 32 Neb. 254.....	217
Cowan v. State, 22 Neb. 519.....	481
Craker v. Chicago & N. W. R. Co., 36 Wis. 657.....	14
Crawford Co. v. Hathaway, 60 Neb. 754.....	193
Crawford Co. v. Hathaway, 60 Neb. 754, 61 Neb. 317, 67 Neb. 325..	578
Creedon v. Patrick, 3 Neb. (Unof.) 459.....	48
Critchfield v. Remaley, 21 Neb. 178.....	105
Cromwell v. County of Sac, 94 U. S. 351.....	234
Crook v. People, 106 Ill. 237.....	658
Crovatt v. Mason, 101 Ga. 246.....	199
Cullen v. Glendora Water Co. 113 Cal. 503.....	272
Dakota County v. Cheney, 22 Neb. 437.....	796
Daniels v. Benedict, 97 Fed. 367.....	100
Danielson v. Goebel, 71 Neb. 301.....	410
Dapper v. Smith, 138 Mich. 104.....	793
Darner v. Daggett, 35 Neb. 695.....	859
Darrow v. Summerhill, 24 Tex. Civ. App. 208.....	174
Darst v. Griffin, 31 Neb. 668.....	796
Davis v. Boone County, 28 Neb. 837.....	794
Davis v. Houghtellin, 33 Neb. 582.....	18
†Davis v. Londgreen, 8 Neb. 43.....	66
Davis v. State, 51 Neb. 301.....	674, 761
De France v. Harmer, 66 Neb. 14.....	652
Delaney v. Boston, 2 Harr. (Del.) 489.....	575
Denison v. Crawford County, 48 Ia. 211.....	149
Devine v. Board of Commissioners, 84 Ill. 590.....	649
Dickinson v. Norwegian Plow Co., 101 Wis. 157.....	540
Dixon v. People, 163 Ill. 179.....	156
Dobson v. State, 61 Neb. 585.....	838
Dodge v. People, 4 Neb. 220.....	674
Dodge County v. Acom, 61 Neb. 376.....	796
Dolan v. State, 44 Neb. 643.....	849
Donahue v. State, 70 Neb. 72.....	848
Dorrington v. Myers, 11 Neb. 391.....	112
Drainage Commissioners v. Volke, 163 Ill. 243.....	799
Duncan v. City of Philadelphia, 173 Pa. St. 550.....	721
Durkee v. Koehler, 78 Neb. 833.....	432
Earl of Daloraine v. Browne, 3 Brown Ch. (Eng.) *633.....	732

	PAGE
Myers v. Nason, 54 Neb. 143.....	277
Edwards v. Kearney, 12 Neb. 502.....	687
Edwards v. State, 69 Neb. 336.....	224, 228
Elder v. Burrus, 6 Humph. (Tenn.) 358.....	576
Eklire v. Schnyler, 15 Neb. 561.....	611
Emery v. Darling, 50 Ohio St. 160.....	708
Ex parte Chamberlain, 4 Cow. (N. Y.) 49.....	156
Ex parte Dement, 53 Ala. 389.....	156
Ex parte Thornton, 12 Fed. 538.....	761
Farmers & Merchants Ins. Co. v. Dobney, 62 Neb. 213.....	290
Fiala v. Ainsworth, 63 Neb. 1.....	724
Fidelity & Deposit Co. v. Libby, 72 Neb. 850.....	592
Field v. Lincoln Traction Co., 74 Neb. 418.....	527
First Nat. Bank v. Gibson, 57 Neb. 246, 60 Neb. 767.....	232
Fiak v. Osgood, 2 Neb. (Unof.) 100.....	48
Fiak v. Thorp, 60 Neb. 713.....	534
Fitch v. Mason City & Clear Lake Traction Co., 124 Ia. 665.....	768
Flinn v. Prairie County, 60 Ark. 204.....	156
Foley v. Holtry, 43 Neb. 133.....	748
Folts v. Cogswell, 36 Cal. 542.....	140
Force v. Stubbs, 41 Neb. 271.....	277
Fox v. State, 5 How. (U. S.) 410.....	760
Foxworthy v. City of Hastings, 25 Neb. 133.....	187
Franklin v. Kelley, 2 Neb. 79.....	644
Fremont, M. & M. V. R. Co. v. Harlin, 50 Neb. 698.....	567
French v. City of Burlington, 42 Ia. 614.....	753
French v. Teschemaker, 24 Cal. 518.....	665
Frenzer v. Dufrene, 58 Neb. 431.....	618
Fullerton v. Sherrill, 114 Ia. 511.....	114
Fulton v. City of Lincoln, 9 Neb. 358.....	752
Funk v. Kansas Mfg. Co., 53 Neb. 450.....	535
Gallaher v. Smith, 55 Mo. App. 116.....	202
Galligar v. Payne, 34 La. Ann. 1057.....	114
Galligher v. Smiley, 28 Neb. 189.....	109
Galusha v. Galusha, 116 N. Y. 635.....	100
Gandy v. Estate of Bissell, 72 Neb. 356.....	636
Gariand v. Wells, 15 Neb. 298.....	92
Garrison v. People, 6 Neb. 274.....	42, 222
Gartner v. Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co., 71 Neb. 444.....	566
Gass v. Coblens, 43 Mo. 377.....	14
Gates v. Andrews, 37 N. Y. 657.....	731
Gammer v. State, 163 Ind. 150.....	202
Germania Life Ins. Co. v. Lunkenheimer, 127 Ind. 536.....	405
Gerner v. Mosher, 58 Neb. 135.....	734, 746
Gerner v. Thompson, 74 Fed. 125.....	739

	PAGE
Gerner v. Yates, 61 Neb. 100.....	739
Giles v. Miller, 36 Neb. 346.....	112
Gill v. Lydick, 40 Neb. 508.....	577
*Gillespie v. Cooper, 36 Neb. 775.....	91, 723
Goes v. Gage County, 67 Neb. 616.....	811
Golden v. Newbrand, 52 Ia. 59.....	17
Good v. Norley, 28 Ia. 188.....	571
Goracke v. Hintz, 13 Neb. 390.....	613
Gosman v. State, 106 Ind. 203.....	667
Gould v. Evansville & C. R. Co., 91 U. S. 526.....	743
Graham v. Estate of Townsend, 62 Neb. 364.....	90
Graham v. Hartnett, 10 Neb. 517.....	872
Gran v. Houston, 45 Neb. 815.....	612
Granger v. State, 52 Neb. 352.....	354
Grant v. White, 42 Mo. 285.....	108
Gray v. Portland Bank, 3 Mass. 363.....	14
Gregory v. Kaar, 36 Neb. 533.....	290
Gregory v. Woodworth, 107 Ia. 151.....	743
Greusel v. Smith, 85 Mich. 574.....	308
Griffith v. Woolworth, 28 Neb. 715.....	161
Gutta Percha & Rubber Mfg. Co. v. Village of Ogalalla, 40 Neb. 775.....	752
Hackney v. Hargreaves Bros., 3 Neb. (Unof.) 676.....	700
Hackney v. Raymond Bros. Clarke Co., 68 Neb. 624, 633.....	701
Hackworth v. Zollars, 30 Ia., 433.....	235
Hagensick v. Caster, 53 Neb. 495.....	94
Hall v. Hooper, 47 Neb. 111.....	277, 321
Hall v. State, 40 Neb. 320.....	222, 496
Hallenbeck v. Hahn, 2 Neb. 377.....	666
Hamilton v. Chicago, M. & St. P. R. Co., 119 Ia. 650.....	15
Hanlon v. Pollard, 17 Neb. 368.....	120
Hanscom v. City of Omaha, 11 Neb. 37.....	677
Hansen v. Kinney, 46 Neb. 207.....	289
Hanson v. Ingwaldson, 84 Minn. 346.....	308
Hardin v. Jordan, 140 U. S. 371.....	583
Harland v. Lillenthal, 53 N. Y. 438.....	27
Harrell v. Kea, 37 S. Car. 369.....	731
Harrington v. Latta, 23 Neb. 84.....	289
Harris v. King, 16 Ark. 122.....	86
Harrison v. Hartford Fire Ins. Co., 112 Ia. 77.....	744
Harrison v. Perea, 168 U. S. 311.....	124
Harriss v. Mabry, 23 N. Car. 240.....	14
Havemeyer v. Dahn, 48 Neb. 536.....	112
Havens v. Bliss, 26 N. J. Eq. 363.....	86
Hawes v. State, 46 Neb. 149.....	687
Hawthorne v. State, 45 Neb. 874.....	691
Hazen v. Wilhelmie, 68 Neb. 79.....	251

CASES CITED BY THE COURT.

xl v

	PAGE
Heady v. Fishburn, 3 Neb. 263.....	613
Hedrick v. Strauss, 42 Neb. 485.....	248
Hellman v. Davis, 24 Neb. 793.....	91
Henderson v. Henderson, 3 Hare (Eng.), *100.....	234
Hendrick v. Cook, 4 Ga. 241.....	575
Henry & Coatsworth Co. v. McCurdy, 36 Neb. 863.....	846
Hepburn's Case, 3 Bland (Md.), 95.....	215
Herbert v. Wortendyke, 49 Neb. 182.....	615
Hewit v. Berlin Machine Works, 194 U. S. 296.....	248
Hews v. Kenney, 43 Neb. 815.....	86
Hier v. Anheuser-Busch Brewing Ass'n, 60 Neb. 320.....	339
Hill v. Franklin, 54 Miss. 632.....	114
Hite v. Irvine's Adm'r, 13 Ohio St. 283.....	235
Hixon Map Co. v. Nebraska Post Co., 5 Neb. (Unof.) 383.....	618
Hoagland v. Way, 35 Neb. 387.....	48
Hobson v. Cummins, 57 Neb. 611.....	814
Hodges v. City of Buffalo, 2 Denio (N. Y.), 110.....	753
Hodgkins v. State, 36 Neb. 160.....	495
Hogan v. O'Neil, 17 Neb. 641.....	687
Holt v. State, 62 Neb. 134.....	346
Home Fire Ins. Co. v. Fallon, 45 Neb. 554.....	827
Home Fire Ins. Co. v. Kuhlman, 58 Neb. 488.....	405
Home Investment Co. v. Clarson, 15 S. Dak. 513.....	173
Hood v. Blair State Bank, 3 Neb. (Unof.) 432.....	266
House v. Mullen, 22 Wall. (U. S.) 42.....	416, 743
Howard v. State, 11 Ohio St. 328.....	223
Howe v. McGivern, 25 Wis. 525.....	572
Howes v. Whipple, 41 Ga. 322.....	709
Hughes v. Ins. Co. of North America, 40 Neb. 626.....	405
Humphrey Hardware Co. v. Herrick, 72 Neb. 878.....	255
Hunt v. State Ins. Co., 66 Neb. 125.....	399, 405
Hunt v. Test, 8 Ala. 713.....	142
Hurlburt v. Palmer, 39 Neb. 158.....	615, 816
Hurlburt v. State, 52 Neb. 428.....	496
Hutchinson v. Ainsworth, 73 Cal. 452.....	242
Hyde v. Hyde, 60 Neb. 503.....	113
Indianapolis & St. L. R. Co. v. Horst, 93 U. S. 291.....	768
Inglehart v. Lull, 64 Neb. 758, 69 Neb. 173.....	358
In re Creighton, 12 Neb. 280.....	666
In re Holland Trust Co., 76 Hun (N. Y.), 323.....	124
In re King, 61 N. Y. App. 152.....	124
In re State Treasurer's Settlement, 51 Neb. 116.....	550
In the Matter of the Application of Knapp, 85 N. Y. 284.....	123
Janouch v. Pence, 3 Neb. (Unof.) 867.....	180
Jefferies v. East Omaha Land Co., 134 U. S. 178.....	585

	PAGE
Jenkins v. Eldredge, 3 Story (U. S. C. C.), 181.....	162
Johnson v. Johnson, 62 Minn. 302.....	180
Johnson v. Little, 90 Ga. 781.....	114
Johnson v. Seattle Electric Co., 35 Wash. 382.....	767
Jones v. Britton, 102 N. Car. 166.....	436
Jones v. Mosher, 107 Fed. 561.....	738, 742
Jones v. Soulard, 24 How. (U. S.) 41.....	586
Jordan v. Van Epps, 85 N. Y. 427.....	235
Kane v. Rock River Canal Co., 15 Wis. *179.....	323
Keene v. Sallenbach, 15 Neb. 200.....	723
Kellogg v. Citizens Ins. Co., 94 Wis. 554.....	540
Kennard, Daniels & Co. v. Hollenbeck, 17 Neb. 362.....	723
Kettenbach v. Omaha Life Ass'n, 49 Neb. 842.....	38
Kimbrel v. Willis, 97 Ill. 494.....	114
Kimbro v. Clark, 17 Neb. 403.....	723
King v. Pomeroy, 121 Fed. 287.....	739
King v. Wharton, 12 Mod. (Eng.) 510.....	583
Kinhead v. Ryan, 64 N. J. Eq. 454.....	173
Klabunde v. Byron Reed Co., 69 Neb. 126.....	624
Knight v. Finney, 59 Neb. 274.....	461
Kocher v. Cornell, 59 Neb. 315.....	417
Kofky v. Rosicky, 41 Neb. 328.....	707
Korth v. State, 46 Neb. 631.....	346
Kudrna v. Ainsworth, 65 Neb. 711.....	725
Kyd v. Exchange Bank, 56 Neb. 557.....	615
Ladd v. Holmes, 40 Ore. 167.....	788
Lamb v. Clark, 5 Pick. (Mass.) 193.....	728
Lamb v. Sherman, 19 Neb. 681.....	431
Lamme v. Buse, 70 Mo. 463.....	576
Lammers v. Nissen, 4 Neb. 245.....	576
Lancashire Ins. Co. v. Bush, 60 Neb. 116.....	761
Lane v. Innes, 43 Minn. 137.....	834
Langdon v. Conlin, 67 Neb. 243.....	26
Lange v. Brayton, 104 Cal. 156.....	413
Larimer County Commissioners v. Lee, 3 Colo. App. 177.....	156
Larson v. Butts, 22 Neb. 370.....	119
Law v. People, 87 Ill. 385.....	753
Lawton v. Fonner, 59 Neb. 214.....	457
Leach v. Sutphen, 11 Neb. 527.....	232
Leavitt v. Bell, 55 Neb. 57.....	93
Lee v. Van Voorhis, 78 Hun (N. Y.), 575.....	124
Lees v. Nuttall, 1 Russ. & M. (Eng.) 53.....	163
Leman v. Whitely, 4 Russ. (Eng.) *423.....	163
Leonard v. Commonwealth, 112 Pa. St. 607.....	791
Lerche v. Brasher, 104 N. Y. 157.....	546

CASES CITED BY THE COURT.

xlvii

	PAGE
Lewis v. City of Lincoln , 55 Neb. 1.....	868
Lewis v. Shreveport , 108 U. S. 282.....	752
Lexington v. Fleharty , 74 Neb. 626.....	619
Lincoln & Dawson County Irrigat'n Dist. v. McNeal , 60 Neb. 613..	272
Lincoln Street R. Co. v. City of Lincoln , 61 Neb. 109.....	833
Lincoln Street R. Co. v. McClellan , 54 Neb. 672.....	766
Lincoln Traction Co. v. Heller , 72 Neb. 127.....	462
Lincoln Traction Co. v. Heller , 72 Neb. 134.....	370
Lincoln Traction Co. v. Webb , 73 Neb. 136.....	370
Linton v. Cooper , 53 Neb. 400.....	417
Livingston v. Mayor of New York , 8 Wend. (N. Y.) 85.....	799
Lochner v. New York , 198 U. S. 45.....	762
Logan County v. Carnahan , 66 Neb. 685.....	436, 834, 867
Logan County v. McKinley-Lanning Loan & T. Co. , 70 Neb. 406....	833
Loney v. Courtnay , 24 Neb. 580.....	321
Long v. State , 23 Neb. 33.....	349
Loosey v. Neidig , 52 Neb. 167.....	535
Lowe v. Riley , 57 Neb. 260.....	290
Lowe v. Phillips , 21 Ohio St. 657.....	308
Lowell Five Cents Savings Bank v. Inhabitants of Winchester , 8 Allen (Mass.), 109.....	753
Lycett v. Wolff , 45 Mo. App. 489.....	154
Lyon v. Hussey , 82 Hum (N. Y.), 15.....	27
McAleeer v. State , 46 Neb. 116.....	338
McBratney v. Chandler , 22 Kan. 692.....	140
McBride v. Whitaker , 65 Neb. 137.....	579
McCann v. McLennan , 2 Neb. 286.....	644
McCaraher v. Commonwealth , 5 Watts & Serg. (Pa.) 21.....	35
McCartney v. Ridgway , 160 Ill. 129.....	416
McClellan v. Hein , 56 Neb. 600.....	611
McCormick v. City of Omaha , 87 Neb. 829.....	838
McCormick v. Keith , 8 Neb. 142.....	335
McCormick Harvesting Machine Co. v. Cummins , 59 Neb. 330.....	814
McCune v. Thomas , 6 Neb. 488.....	505
*McGechie v. McGechie , 43 Neb. 523.....	392
McIntosh v. Johnson , 51 Neb. 33.....	644
McKinnon v. McKinnon , 56 Fed. 409.....	710
McKnight v. McKnight , 5 Neb. (Unof.) 260.....	100
McManus v. Carmichael , 3 Ia. 1.....	576, 582
Madison County v. Suman , 79 Mo. 527.....	756
Magneau v. City of Fremont , 30 Neb. 843.....	677
Magoun v. Illinois Trust & Savings Bank , 170 U. S. 283.....	676
Manfull v. Graham , 55 Neb. 645.....	325
Markey v. School District , 58 Neb. 479.....	271
+Martin v. Fillmore County , 44 Neb. 719.....	794, 801
Marts v. State , 26 Ohio St. 162.....	352

	PAGE
Masonic Mutual Benefit Ass'n v. Beck, 77 Ind. 203.....	406
Maynard v. Sigman, 65 Neb. 590.....	65
Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Mobile v. Eslava, 9 Port. (Ala.) 578	582
Mecklem v. Blake, 19 Wis. 419.....	324
Meguire v. Corwine, 101 U. S. 108.....	140
Meng v. Coffee, 67 Neb. 500.....	582
Merchants State Bank of Fargo v. Ruettell, 12 N. Dak. 519.....	180
Merriam v. Goodlett, 36 Neb. 384.....	321
Merrill v. Wright, 41 Neb. 351.....	866
Mickel v. Walraven, 92 Ia. 423.....	731
Millard v. Parsell, 57 Neb. 178.....	86
Miller v. Burlington & M. R. R. Co., 3 Neb. 219.....	15
Missouri v. Nebraska, 196 U. S. 23.....	587
Missouri P. R. Co. v. Hemingway, 63 Neb. 610.....	71
Mizner v. School District, 2 Neb. (Unof.) 238.....	264
Mobile & O. R. Co. v. People, 182 Ill. 559.....	80
Modern Woodmen of America v. Colman, 64 Neb. 162.....	404
Montague v. Church School District, 34 N. J. Law, 218.....	273
Montague v. Marunda, 71 Neb. 805.....	361
Montgomery v. Willis, 45 Neb. 434.....	105, 180
Moore v. Waterman, 40 Neb. 498.....	595
Moores v. State, 58 Neb. 608.....	771
Moores v. State, 71 Neb. 522.....	848
Morrill v. McNeill, 3 Neb. (Unof.) 220.....	48
Morris v. Linton, 61 Neb. 537.....	417
Morris v. Washington County, 72 Neb. 174.....	795
Mosheuvel v. District of Columbia, 191 U. S. 247.....	131
Mott v. Consumers' Ice Co. 73 N. Y. 543.....	15
Moyer v. Cantieny, 41 Minn. 242.....	140
Mugler v. Kansas, 123 U. S. 623.....	763
Muldoon v. Levi, 25 Neb. 457.....	666
Munday v. Whissenhunt, 90 N. Car. 458.....	27
Murphy v. Warren, 55 Neb. 215.....	687
National Fire Ins. Co. v. Eastern Building & L. Ass'n, 63 Neb. 698..	8
Nebraska v. Iowa, 143 U. S. 359.....	587
Nebraska Land & Feeding Co. v. Trauerman, 70 Neb. 795.....	325
Nebraska R. Co. v. Van Dusen, 6 Neb. 160.....	645
Neil v. Tolman, 12 Ore. 289.....	235
Neves v. Scott, 9 How. (U. S.) 196.....	416
New York & O. M. R. Co. v. Van Horn, 57 Neb. 473.....	665
Norfolk Beet Sugar Co. v. Hight, 56 Neb. 162.....	6
Northwestern Traveling Men's Ass'n v. Schauss, 148 Ill. 304.....	404
Nothdurft v. City of Lincoln, 66 Neb. 430.....	721
Ogden v. State, 3 Neb. (Unof.) 886.....	692

CASES CITED BY THE COURT.

-xlix

PAGE

Ohio & M. R. Co. v. Trowbridge, 126 Ind. 391.....	468
Olcott v. Bolton, 50 Neb. 779.....	748
Oliver v. Lansing, 57 Neb. 352.....	307
Omaha Fire Ins. Co. v. Dierks, 43 Neb. 473.....	826
Omaha Nat. Bank v. Kiper, 60 Neb. 33.....	6
Omaha & R. V. R. Co. v. Walker 17 Neb. 435.....	259
Omaha Savings Bank v. Rosewater, 1 Neb. (Unof.) 723.....	323
Oscanyan v. Arms Co., 103 U. S. 261.....	140
Ottawa v. Carey, 108 U. S. 110.....	752
Owen v. Evans, 134 N. Y. 514.....	255
Packer v. Bird, 71 Cal. 134.....	576
Packer v. Bird, 137 U. S. 661.....	576
Parkinson v. State, 14 Md. 184.....	682
Palmer v. Warren Street R. Co., 206 Pa. St. 574.....	768
Patterson v. Kentucky, 97 U. S. 507.....	764
Paxton v. Scott, 66 Neb. 385.....	264, 267
Paxton v. Smith, 41 Neb. 56.....	457
Peet v. Chicago & N. W. R. Co., 20 Wis. 624.....	716
Peet v. White, 43 Ia. 400.....	154
People v. Brundage, 78 N. Y. 403.....	199
People v. Bull, 46 N. Y. 57.....	659, 664
People v. Chicago & A. R. Co., 130 Ill. 175.....	80
People v. Foley, 148 N. Y. 677.....	661
People v. Jeroloman, 139 N. Y. 14.....	848
People v. Leffler, 175 Ill. 585.....	658
People v. Lord, 9 Mich. 226.....	667
People v. McElroy, 72 Mich. 446.....	665
People v. May, 9 Colo. 80.....	753
People v. Van De Carr, 178 N. Y. 428.....	759
Peterson v. Hopewell, 55 Neb. 670.....	686
Phoenix Ins. Co. v. King, 54 Neb. 630.....	859
Pjarrou v. State, 47 Neb. 294.....	349
Plumber v. Park, 62 Neb. 665.....	846
Pohlman v. Evangel'l Lutheran Trinity Church, 60 Neb. 364..	640, 686
Pomerene v. School District, 56 Neb. 126.....	271
Pond v. People, 8 Mich. 149.....	350
Powell v. Eagan, 42 Neb. 482.....	771
Pratt v. Galloway, 1 Neb. (Unof.) 168, 172.....	846
Pray v. Hegeman, 98 N. Y. 351.....	235
Prescott v. Haughey, 65 Fed. 653.....	739
Priest v. State, 10 Neb. 393.....	674
Pruitt v. Squires, 64 Kan. 855.....	206, 667
Pugh v. Evans, 31 Mo. App. 290.....	154
Quick v. Sachsse, 31 Neb. 312.....	687
Railway O. & El. Accident Ass'n v. Drummond, 56 Neb. 235.....	9, 290

	PAGE
Rapp v. Sarpy County, 71 Neb. 382.....	371, 767
Rapp v. Sarpy County, 71 Neb. 382, 385.....	128
Rath v. Zembleman, 49 Neb. 351.....	69
Ream v. State, 52 Neb. 727.....	354
Rebstock v. Superior Court, 146 Cal. 308.....	789
Red Willow County v. Davis, 49 Neb. 796.....	273
Redecker v. Bowen, 15 R. I. 52.....	308
Revalk v. Kraemer, 8 Cal. 66.....	114
Reynolds v. Lansford, 16 Tex. 286.....	731
Richardson v. De Giverville, 107 Mo. 422.....	417
Richardson v. Doty, 44 Neb. 73.....	537
*Richardson v. Scott's Bluff County, 59 Neb. 400.....	132
Roberson v. Reiter, 38 Neb. 198.....	255
Roberts v. Hamilton, 56 Ia. 683.....	743
Roberts v. Quincy, O. & K. C. R. Co., 43 Mo. App. 287.....	602
Roberts v. Taylor, 19 Neb. 184.....	611
Robinson v. Springfield Co., 21 Fla. 203.....	86
Robinson Notion Co. v. Foot, 42 Neb. 156.....	90
Rochester Loan & Banking Co. v. Liberty Ins. Co., 44 Neb. 537....	405
Rodman v. Michigan C. R. Co., 59 Mich. 397.....	743
Rogers v. Brown, 61 Mo. 187.....	726
Rose v. Dunklee, 12 Colo. App. 403.....	731
Rose v. Hayden, 35 Kan. 106.....	162
Rosenbloom v. State, 64 Neb. 342.....	761
Ross v. McManigal, 61 Neb. 90.....	277
Royal Neighbors of America v. Wallace, 66 Neb. 543, 5 Neb. (Unof.) 519, 73 Neb. 409.....	88
Ruhrstrat v. People, 185 Ill. 133.....	759
Runge v. Brown, 23 Neb. 817.....	748
Russell v. State, 62 Neb. 512.....	480
St. Louis, I. M. & S. R. Co. v. Ramsey, 53 Ark 314.....	576
St. Louis v. Myers, 113 U. S. 566.....	585
Santa Cruz Bank v. Cooper, 56 Cal. 339.....	114
Schaffer v. State, 22 Neb. 557.....	494
Schmid v. Schmid, 37 Neb. 629.....	289
School District v. Saline County, 9 Neb. 403.....	218
School District v. Stough, 4 Neb. 357.....	271
Schurmeier v. St. Paul & P. R. Co., 10 Minn. 59, 7 Wall. (U. S.) 272..	576
Schuyler Nat. Bank v. Bollong, 24 Neb. 821.....	741
Scott v. Society of Russian Israelites, 59 Neb. 571.....	864
Scott v. Wright, 50 Neb. 849.....	535
Secor v. Pestana, 37 Ill. 525.....	108
Sedgwick v. Stanton, 14 N. Y. 289.....	140
Seiver v. Union P. R. Co., 68 Neb. 91.....	814
Selby v. Pueppka, 73 Neb. 179.....	833
†Seward v. Didier, 16 Neb. 58.....	569

	PAGE
Seymour v. Street, 5 Neb. 88.....	755
Shaffer v. Stull, 32 Neb. 94.....	640, 686
Sharp v. Johnson, 44 Neb. 165.....	598
Sheehan v. Flynn, 59 Minn. 436.....	71
Sheibly v. Dixon County, 61 Neb. 409.....	153
Sheldon v. Parker, 66 Neb. 610.....	266
Sherman S. & S. R. Co. v. Bridges, 16 Tex. Civ. App. 64.....	467
Shipman v. Mitchell, 64 Tex. 174.....	108
Shipp v. Davis, 78 Ga. 201.....	728
Shoemaker v. Hatch, 13 Nev. 261.....	576
Shreck v. Hanlon, 66 Neb. 451.....	265
Silloway v. Brown, 12 Allen (Mass.), 30.....	114
Sills v. Goodyear, 80 Mo. App. 128.....	686
Sims v. Jones, 54 Neb. 769.....	857
Sines v. Superintendents of the Poor, 58 Mich. 503.....	540
Sioux Nat. Bank v. Norfolk State Bank, 56 Fed. 139.....	748
Sisson v. Cleveland & T. R. Co., 14 Mich. 489.....	716
Sivers v. Sivers, 97 Cal. 518.....	743
Skinner v. Skinner, 38 Neb. 756.....	180
Slater v. Skirving, 45 Neb. 594.....	699
Slater v. Skirving, 51 Neb. 108.....	234
Slattery v. Harley, 58 Neb. 575.....	582
Smalls v. White, 4 Neb. 353.....	783
Smith v. Croom, 7 Fla. 81.....	350
Smith v. Kaiser, 17 Neb. 184.....	232
Smith v. Newburg, 77 N. Y. 130.....	752
Smith v. Orton, 18 L. ed. (U. S.) 62.....	166
Smith v. Perry, 52 Neb. 738.....	546
Smith v. Spaulding, 34 Neb. 128.....	288
Smith v. State, 21 Neb. 552.....	494
Solt v. Anderson, 63 Neb. 734.....	119
Southard v. Benner, 72 N. Y. 424.....	266
Sovereign Camp W. O. W. v. Woodruff, 80 Miss. 546.....	39
Soward v. Chicago & N. W. R. Co., 33 Ia. 386.....	602
Spears v. Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co., 43 Neb. 720.....	810
Spence v. Apley, 4 Neb. (Unof.) 358.....	410
Spirk v. Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co., 57 Neb. 565.....	6
Spurk v. Dean, 49 Neb. 66.....	505
Stahnka v. Kreitle, 66 Neb. 829.....	610
Stanley v. Snyder, 43 Ark. 429.....	114
Stanton v. Embrey, 93 U. S. 548.....	141
Staples v. Connor, 79 Cal. 14.....	571
State v. Babcock, 21 Neb. 599.....	644
State v. Bartley, 39 Neb. 353.....	550, 644
State v. Bartley, 50 Neb. 874.....	81
State v. Board of County Commissioners, 13 Neb. 57.....	380

	PAGE
State v. Board of County Commissioners, 60 Neb. 566.....	457, 618
State v. Bowen, 54 Neb. 211.....	650
State v. Bowman, 45 Neb. 752.....	81
State v. Breidenthal, 55 Kan. 308.....	199
State v. Corner, 22 Neb. 265.....	783
State v. Des Moines & K. C. R. Co., 87 Ia. 644.....	80
State v. Dunn, 66 Kan. 483.....	354
State v. Farmers & Merchants Irrigation Co., 59 Neb. 1.....	193, 666
State v. Galusha, 74 Neb. 188.....	653, 664
State v. Graham, 16 Neb. 74.....	649
State v. Graves, 66 Neb. 17.....	685
State v. Halder, 2 McCord (S. Car.) *377.....	495
State v. Hedlund, 16 Neb. 566.....	205
State v. Holcomb, 46 Neb. 88.....	656
State v. Horton, 70 Neb. 334, 343.....	339
State v. Howe, 25 Ohio St. 588.....	667
State v. Jensen, 86 Minn. 19.....	787
State v. Johnson, 87 Minn. 221.....	788
State v. Kendall, 38 Neb. 817.....	496
State v. Lancaster County, 4 Neb. 587.....	678
State v. Lansing, 46 Neb. 514.....	679
State v. Lusk, 18 Mo. 333.....	667
State v. Magney, 52 Neb. 508.....	193
State v. Menaugh, 151 Ind. 260.....	667
State v. Montgomery, 92 Me. 433.....	761
State v. Moore, 40 Neb. 854.....	211
State v. Moore, 48 Neb. 870.....	648, 777, 794
State v. Moores, 55 Neb. 480.....	679
State v. Moores, 61 Neb. 9.....	199, 667
State v. Moores, 70 Neb. 48.....	648
State v. Nelson, 21 Neb. 572.....	81
State v. Nelson, 34 Neb. 162.....	677
State v. Nolan, 71 Neb. 136.....	648
State v. Omaha, 14 Neb. 265.....	81
State v. Osborn, 143 Ind. 671.....	731
State v. Paul, 56 Neb. 369.....	25
State v. Peacock, 40 Ohio St. 333.....	352
State v. Persinger, 76 Mo. 346.....	354
State v. Plasters, 74 Neb. 652.....	669
State v. Poston, 58 Ohio St. 620.....	787
State v. Poynter, 59 Neb. 417.....	193, 651, 666
State v. Ream, 16 Neb. 681.....	679
State v. Republican V. R. Co., 17 Neb. 647.....	79
State v. Scott, 70 Neb. 685.....	649
State v. Smith, 35 Neb. 13.....	651, 666
State v. Stanley, 66 N. Car. 59.....	656

CASES CITED BY THE COURT.

liii

	PAGE
State v. Stewart, 52 Neb. 243.....	666
State v. Stonestreet, 99 Mo. 361.....	199
State v. Stuht, 52 Neb. 209.....	648, 666
State v. Tallman, 24 Wash. 426.....	667
State v. Tallman, 25 Wash. 295.....	199
State v. Teipner, 36 Minn. 535.....	156
State v. Thayer, 74 Wis. 48.....	263
State v. Thoman, 10 Kan. 191.....	202
State v. Whipple, 60 Neb. 650.....	81
State v. Whittemore, 12 Neb. 252.....	152
State v. Yardley, 95 Tenn. 546.....	780
State Electro-Medical Institute v. Platner, 74 Neb. 23.....	43
State Electro-Medical Institute v. State, 74 Neb. 40.....	24
Stemberg v. State, 48 Neb. 299.....	537
Stewart v. Mather, 32 Wis. 344.....	170
Straton v. Dialogue, 16 N. J. Eq. 70.....	86
Streeter v. Rolph, 13 Neb. 388.....	232
Streissguth v. Kroll, 86 Minn. 325.....	636
Strickler v. Hargis, 34 Neb. 471.....	726
Stuart v. Bank of Staplehurst, 57 Neb. 569.....	739
Stylo v. Wisconsin Odd Fellows Mutual Life Ins. Co., 64 Wis. 224..	407
Suber v. Chandler, 18 S. Car. 526.....	728
Sullivan v. State, 58 Neb. 796.....	671
Supreme Council of the Catholic Benevolent Legion v. Boyle, 10 Ind. App. 301.....	405
Supreme Tribe of Ben Hur v. Hall, 24 Ind. App. 316.....	405
Sutton v. Toomer, 7 B. & C. (Eng.) 416.....	414
Swift & Co. v. Holoubek, 60 Neb. 784.....	810
Sycamore Marsh Harvester Co. v. Grundrad, 16 Neb. 529.....	497
Tallon v. Grand Copper Mining Co., 55 Mich. 147.....	540
Tatterson v. Suffolk Mfg. Co., 106 Mass. 56.....	540
Taylor v. Bemis, 110 U. S. 42.....	141
Teske v. Dittberner, 65 Neb. 167.....	708
Thibert v. Supreme Lodge Knights of Honor, 78 Minn. 448.....	408
Thomas v. City of St. Cloud, 90 Minn. 477.....	649
Thomas v. County Commissioners, 5 Ohio N. P. 449.....	799
Thompson v. Lynam, 1 Del. Ch. 64.....	436
Thorne v. Adams County, 22 Neb. 825.....	218
Thrall v. Omaha Hotel Co., 5 Neb. 295.....	537
Tindall v. Peterson, 71 Neb. 160.....	569
Titus v. Glens Falls Ins. Co., 81 N. Y. 410.....	406
Todd v. York County, 72 Neb. 207.....	67
Toledo W. & W. R. Co. v. Harmon, 47 Ill. 298.....	14
Tomer v. Densmore, 8 Neb. 384.....	613
Town v. Missouri P. R. Co., 50 Neb. 768.....	71

	PAGE
Trice v. Comstock, 121 Fed. 620.....	171
Trist v. Child, 21 Wall. (U. S.) 441.....	139, 143
Troxell v. Stevens, 57 Neb. 329.....	94
Trumble v. Trumble, 37 Neb. 340.....	648, 783, 793
Underwood v. Scott, 43 Kan. 714.....	43
Union P. R. Co. v. Burlington & M. R. R. Co., 19 Neb. 386.....	644
Union P. R. Co. v. Elliott, 54 Neb. 299.....	628
Union P. R. Co. v. Fickenschner, 72 Neb. 187.....	498
Union P. R. Co. v. Mertes, 35 Neb. 204.....	744
United States v. Fero, 18 Fed. 901.....	227
Updegraph v. Commonwealth, 11 Serg. & Rawl. (Pa.) 406.....	762
Ure v. Reichenberg, 63 Neb. 899.....	867
Van Akin v. Dunn, 117 Mich. 421.....	848
Vandemark v. Schoonmaker, 9 Hun (N. Y.), 16.....	436
Vars v. Grand Trunk R. Co., 23 U. C. C. P. 143.....	467
Violet v. Rose, 39 Neb. 660.....	112
Wachsmuth v. Orient Ins. Co., 49 Neb. 590.....	48
Waggle v. Worthy, 74 Cal. 266.....	119
Wallace v. Goodall, 18 N. H. 439.....	568
Wardell v. McConnell 23 Neb. 152.....	610
Warlier v. Williams, 53 Neb. 143.....	276
Washburn College v. Commissioners, 8 Kan. 344.....	865
Wead v. City of Omaha, 73 Neb. 321.....	839
Weatherford v. Union P. R. Co., 5 Neb. (Unof.) 464.....	230
Weaver v. Haviland, 142 N. Y. 534.....	731
Webb v. Cowley, 5 Lea (Tenn.), 722.....	114
Webster v. City of Hastings, 59 Neb. 563.....	751
Wehrle v. Wehrle, 39 Ohio St. 365.....	572
Wenham v. State, 65 Neb. 397.....	355
West v. State, 1 Wis. *269.....	156
West Chicago Street R. Co. v. Winters, 107 Ill. App. 221.....	768
Western White Bronze Co. v. Portrey, 50 Neb. 801.....	335
Westervelt v. Filter, 2 Neb. (Unof.) 731.....	91
White v. City of Lincoln, 5 Neb. 505.....	783
White v. Sheldon, 4 Nev. 280.....	86
Whitlock v. Gosson, 35 Neb. 829.....	112
Whitman v. State, 17 Neb. 224.....	495
Wiggenhorn v. Kountz, 23 Neb. 690.....	577
Wilber v. Wooley, 44 Neb. 739.....	686
Wilbur v. Jeep, 37 Neb. 604.....	537
Willey v. Collier, 7 Md. 273.....	142
Williamson v. Paxton, 18 Gratt. (Va.) 475.....	108
Wilson v. Buchanan, 7 Gratt. (Va.) 334.....	731
Wilson v. Carey, 40 Vt. 179.....	414

CASES CITED BY THE COURT.

lv

	PAGE
Wilson v. Clark, 63 Kan. 505.....	195
Witmer's Appeal, 45 Pa. St. 455.....	436
Wood v. Fowler, 26 Kan. 682.....	576
Wood v. Roeder, 45 Neb. 311.....	755
Woodruff v. State, 72 Neb. 818.....	225
Woods v. Dille, 11 Ohio, 455.....	166
Worden v. Crist, 106 Ill. 326.....	166
Worley v. Shong, 35 Neb. 312.....	771
Wright v. Dunning, 46 Ill. 271.....	119
Wright v. State, 45 Neb. 44.....	346
Wright v. Tebbitts, 91 U. S. 252.....	140
Wylie v. Coxe, 15 How. (U. S.) 415.....	142
Yale v. West Middle School District, 59 Conn. 489.....	284
Yarboro v. Brewster, 38 Tex. 397.....	572
Yeazel v. White, 40 Neb. 432.....	431, 857
Young v. Roberts, 17 Neb. 426.....	505
Zehr v. Miller 40 Neb. 791.....	289
Zimmerman v. State, 46 Neb. 13.....	688



STATUTES AND CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS CITED AND CONSTRUED.

Figures in parentheses indicate corresponding sections in Cobbey's Annotated Statutes.

NEBRASKA.

CONSTITUTION.

	PAGE
Art. I, sec. 22.....	777, 790
Art. III, sec. 11.....	353, 680, 782
Art. III, sec. 15.....	648
Art. V, sec. 1.....	190, 786
Art. V, sec. 10.....	656
Art. VI, secs. 4, 10, 15, 20.....	191
Art. VI, sec. 22.....	214
Art. VIII, sec. 6.....	263
Art. IX, sec. 1.....	675, 678
Art. IX, sec. 2.....	864
Art. IX, sec. 3.....	833
Art. IX, sec. 9.....	213
Art. XV, sec. 3.....	204
Art. XVI, sec. 13.....	188, 656, 661, 666
Art. XVI, secs. 13, 14.....	191
Art. XVI, secs. 21, 22.....	192
Art. XVIII, sec. 1.....	792

SESSION LAWS.

1879.	
P. 193.....	751
P. 343.....	219
1883.	
Ch. 16.....	751
1885.	
Ch. 14.....	749
1887.	
Ch. 14.....	749
1895.	
Ch. 22.....	593
(lvii)	

	1901.	PAGE
Ch. 11.....		82
Ch. 54.....		675
Ch. 93.....		353
	1903.	
Ch. 75, secs. 26, 27.....		641
Ch. 139.....		757
	1905.	
Ch. 16, sec. 12.....		646
Ch. 47.....		653
Ch. 54, sec. 1.....		670
Ch. 65.....		189
Ch. 66.....		776
Ch. 112.....		850
Ch. 112, sec. 1.....		852
Ch. 117.....		675
Ch. 198.....		682
	GENERAL STATUTES, 1873.	
Ch. 20, sec. 2.....		197
	COMPILED STATUTES.	
	1897.	
Ch. 73, sec. 74.....		161
	1901.	
Ch. 77, art. I, sec. 138.....		436
	1903.	
Ch. 7, sec. 5 (3604).....		27
Ch. 10, sec. 9 (9008).....		593
Ch. 12a, sec. 69 (7518).....		838
Ch. 12a, sec. 101b (7552).....		836
Ch. 12a, sec. 158 (7626).....		837
Ch. 14, art. I, sec. 80 (8759).....		630
Ch. 15a, sec. 1 (6950).....		582
Ch. 23, sec. 117 (4928).....		570
Ch. 25, sec. 6 (5328).....		827
Ch. 26 (5600-5868).....		778
Ch. 26, secs. 101, 103, 104, 107 (5703, 5705, 5706, 5709).....		667
Ch. 26, secs. 117, 118 (5714, 5715).....		779
Ch. 26, sec. 129 (5768).....		777
Ch. 28, sec. 3 (9029).....		149
Ch. 28, secs. 3, 34 (9029, 9060).....		35
Ch. 28, sec. 31 (9057).....		150
Ch. 32, sec. 20 (5969).....		90
Ch. 36, secs. 1, 2, 15 (6200, 6201, 6214).....		110
Ch. 36, secs. 3, 5, 15, 17 (6202, 6204, 6214, 6216).....		111
Ch. 36, sec. 4 (6203).....		119

	PAGE
Ch. 40, sec. 17 (9606).....	151
Ch. 43, secs. 91, 93 (6483, 6485).....	406
Ch. 43, sec. 100 (6492).....	486
Ch. 50, sec. 4 (7153).....	771
Ch. 50, sec. 6 (7155).....	593
Ch. 55 (9416-9492)	42
Ch. 55, secs. 7, 17 (9422, 9431).....	42
Ch. 72, art. I, sec. 3 (10039).....	766
Ch. 73, sec. 48 (10251).....	432
Ch. 73, sec. 50 (10253).....	93
Ch. 73, sec. 74 (10258).....	410
Ch. 77, art. I (10400, 10643).....	851
Ch. 77, art. I, sec. 13 (10412).....	864
Ch. 77, art. I, secs. 105, 121 (10504, 10520).....	851
Ch. 77, art. I, sec. 124 (10523).....	852
Ch. 77, art. I, secs. 184, 186, 187 (10583, 10585, 10526).....	219
Ch. 77, art. I, sec. 231 (10630).....	867
Ch. 79, sec. 2, subd. 14 (11237).....	262
Ch. 83, art. III, sec. 6 (9094).....	215
Ch. 83, art. III, sec. 6 (9094).....	213
Ch. 89, art. I, sec. 20 (5519).....	378
Ch. 89, art. III, sec. 1 (5543).....	72
Ch. 93a, art. III, sec. 24 (6846).....	271

1905.

Ch. 77, art. VIII, sec. 11 (10716).....	676
---	-----

CODE.

Sec. 5.....	727
Sec. 8.....	230
Secs. 51-60.....	813
Sec. 65.....	814
Sec. 69.....	755
Sec. 83.....	324
Secs. 138, 139.....	320
Sec. 144.....	321
Sec. 198, subd. 8.....	726
Sec. 242.....	728
Sec. 311.....	419
Sec. 420.....	104
Sec. 430.....	743
Sec. 442.....	325
Sec. 444.....	150
Sec. 445.....	151
Secs. 586, 1008.....	595
Sec. 715.....	42
Sec. 828.....	306

STATUTES, ETC., CITED.

	PAGE
Secs. 902, 903	827
Secs. 1007, 1086, 1087	245
Sec. 1022	230
Sec. 1106	214

CRIMINAL CODE.

Secs. 11, 12	220
Sec. 12	228
Sec. 121	331
Sec. 412	496

UNITED STATES.

REVISED STATUTES.

Sec. 5211	734
Sec. 5239	741

CASES DETERMINED
IN THE
SUPREME COURT OF NEBRASKA
AT
JANUARY TERM, 1905.

CHICAGO, ROCK ISLAND & PACIFIC RAILWAY COMPANY V.
ALEXANDER DUNDY KERR.

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,503.

- 1. Petition: SUFFICIENCY ON APPEAL.** Where a petition is for the first time assailed in this court because of its alleged failure to state a cause of action, its allegations will receive a liberal construction, with a view of giving effect to the pleader's purpose, and, if possible, sustaining the petition.
- 1a. ———: ———.** A reviewing court will not only liberally construe a petition thus assailed, in order to uphold it if possible, but will view it in the light of the entire record; and where, from the nature of the answer and the testimony adduced, it appears that both parties have placed the same construction on such petition, this court will not ignore such construction in ruling on the sufficiency of the petition, even though the petition standing alone might not admit of such construction.
- 1b. ———: ———.** A defective or ambiguous petition may be aided and its infirmities cured by averments in the answer. *Beebe v. Latimer*, 59 Neb. 305.
- 1c. ———: ———.** The petition in the case at bar examined, and, when construed in the light of the entire record and under the rules above mentioned, *held* to state a cause of action, and sufficient to support a judgment in plaintiff's favor.
- 2. Master's Liability.** The master is liable for the acts of his servant within the general scope of his employment while about his master's business, though the act be negligent, wanton, wilful or malicious.

Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co. v. Kerr.

2a. Evidence examined, and held sufficient to support a verdict in the plaintiff's favor, and to show that the acts done by the servant which are complained of were within the general scope of his employment and authority, and in furtherance of the business and interests of his master.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: WIL-
LARD W. SLABAUGH, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

*M. A. Low, W. F. Evans and Woolworth & McHugh, for
plaintiff in error.*

McCoy & Olmsted, contra.

HOLCOMB, C. J.

The plaintiff, defendant in error, obtained a judgment in the court below for damages for personal injuries alleged to have been sustained by reason of the negligence of the servant of the defendant railway company, plaintiff in error, and it is sought by this action to secure a reversal of such judgment. The action is grounded on alleged negligence of the conductor of the defendant company while ejecting the plaintiff, a boy about 16 years of age, who was a trespasser on a moving freight train, and in so doing, as is alleged, throwing the plaintiff under the wheel of one of the cars, thereby causing the crushing of one of his lower limbs near the ankle, rendering amputation necessary. It is contended here on the part of the defendant that the judgment cannot be upheld, for the reason that the petition states no cause of action against the defendant, and that under the pleadings the defendant was entitled to a judgment in the court below. It is further contended that under the evidence the company is not liable to the plaintiff for the injury received by him; the conductor's interference, if any, being, as contended for, not for the purpose of putting the plaintiff off the train or of resisting his attempt to board the train, and therefore it was not within the scope of the conductor's employment, and hence the company is not legally liable therefor.

The petition, among other things, alleges: "The said Alexander Dundy Kerr, the plaintiff, was in the said town or city of Neola, and, while the said freight train was at said town or city of Neola, wishing to return to his home in said city of Omaha, and without having paid or offering to pay any fare, but peaceably and with the knowledge of the conductor thereon, became a rider on said freight train, in a position thereon on the south side of said train, wholly outside of the wheels of the cars, and south of the south rail of the roadbed, and in a position of safety from harm or injury to the plaintiff while the train was in motion, as was well known to said conductor, unless there was an injury to the train, or the plaintiff was forcibly ejected, or compelled to alight therefrom while the train was running at high speed; and said position of the plaintiff was beneath and in the middle, but at the very side, of the car on which he placed himself, and from which he could and did remove himself without any necessity or possibility of contact with the rail of the roadbed or wheels of the car, and the position of the plaintiff under the car was such that his presence there was and could be no impediment of or interference with the management and further operation of the train on its westward journey. But after said train was in motion, and while it was going on its way as aforesaid, at a slow rate of speed, the said conductor, who was a car length or more in front of the plaintiff (and no other employee of the defendant was near or in sight), in the performance of his duty, but in a gruff or angry tone of voice, ordered the plaintiff to get off and keep off of said train, and at the same time, in performing his duty, said conductor proceeded to and did alight from the car on which he (said conductor) was riding, and walked or ran backwards on the ground at the side of the train toward the place where the plaintiff was riding, with the apparent purpose of ejecting plaintiff from the train, and of keeping or preventing him from getting on the train again. The plaintiff heard the said order of said conductor, and, intending to obey it in all

respects, proceeded at once to alight from the train upon the ground, which he did in proper, upright position, with his feet upon the ground, entirely outside of the car and train, and with face forward, and the plaintiff was then in a position and place of absolute safety to himself, and would not have received any injuries to his person about or upon defendant's railway, except for the following facts: The plaintiff, the moment after alighting from said train, and before he had an opportunity or was able to turn and peaceably to leave the side of the train and to leave the railway of the defendant, as he intended to do, came full into the arms of said conductor, and said conductor, in the continued performance of his duty to the defendant, then and there, wilfully, wantonly, negligently, and with a total disregard for the safety of the plaintiff, and of his duty to avoid doing any injury to him, grasped with his hands the arms and shoulders of the plaintiff, and proceeded violently and negligently to shake the plaintiff, who was small of size, and to swing him about and off of the ground, so that, and wholly because thereof, without any fault on the part of the plaintiff, said conductor did, in such performance of his duty, wilfully, wantonly and negligently cause the right leg of the plaintiff to be thrown over and across the south rail of defendant's railway, and beneath the wheel or wheels of said train thereon, and to be run over and crushed a little above the ankle by the wheels of said train, and the leg of the plaintiff was thereby so badly mangled as to render necessary, in order to save the life of plaintiff, the amputation of said leg, as was done, about midway between the ankle and the knee." The answer, while admitting that the plaintiff received certain injuries, denies that the said injuries, or either or any of them, were caused or were the result of any carelessness or negligence on the part of the defendant, or of any of its servants, agents or employees. It is further alleged in the answer "that all of the said injuries were caused by and were the result of the plaintiff's own carelessness and negligence and unlawful

conduct; that the said plaintiff was at the time of receiving said injuries wrongfully, negligently and unlawfully, and without the permission or consent of the defendant, trespassing upon the property of the defendant; that at said time he negligently, wrongfully and unlawfully boarded one of the freight trains of the said defendant, and got upon one of the freight cars of said defendant in said train, under the floor thereof, while the said car and train were in motion, without the knowledge or consent of the defendant, and for the purpose of riding thereon without paying, or attempting to pay, or intending to pay the fare for riding thereon; that said position was an exceedingly dangerous one, and that plaintiff well knew at said time that the said position which he took under said car on said train was an exceedingly dangerous one, and that he had no right to get on or remain upon said car at said place or time, or at any other place or time; that while negligently and wrongfully riding upon said car, under the floor thereof, plaintiff negligently, and without the exercise of any care or caution, alighted from said car and train while the said car and train were in motion; and that by reason of said negligence and carelessness and unlawful and wrongful conduct, the plaintiff received the injuries in question."

The reply is a general denial.

1. With reference to the contention that the petition does not state a cause of action, it occurs to us that both parties to the controversy have at all times during the progress of the trial in the lower court regarded the pleading as sufficient. The defendant company has given the petition such a construction as required it to answer and defend in the action, and it would seem that this court ought not now to construe the petition as not stating a cause of action unless, under a liberal construction of all of its allegations, aided, if it is, by the allegations of the answer, with the view of sustaining it if possible, the conclusion is irresistible that it is defective in substance, and that no cause of action against the defendant has been

stated. The nearest the defendant has approached to a challenge of the sufficiency of the petition, or of the evidence in support of its allegations, was when, at the close of the submission of plaintiff's evidence at the trial, the defendant asked for a peremptory instruction to the jury to return a verdict in its favor on the ground that the testimony introduced in accordance with the averments of the petition affirmatively establishes the fact that the acts complained of were acts done by the conductor, not in the performance of his duty to the master, and not within the scope of his employment, and are acts for which he himself is liable. The motion can be regarded only as a demurrer to the evidence introduced by the plaintiff in support of the cause of action set forth in his petition. The rule in this jurisdiction is that, where an objection to a petition on the ground that it does not state a cause of action is not interposed till after the trial of the case, the pleadings will be liberally construed, and, if possible, sustained. *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Spirk*, 51 Neb. 167; *Spirk v. Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co.*, 57 Neb. 565. Against an objection at the inception of a trial to the introduction of any evidence, on the ground that the petition does not state a cause of action, the pleadings attacked will be liberally construed, and, if possible, sustained. *Norfolk Beet Sugar Co. v. Hight*, 56 Neb. 162. The petition which is attacked for the first time in the supreme court on the ground that it does not state a cause of action will be liberally construed. *Omaha Nat. Bank v. Kiper*, 60 Neb. 33. In the opinion it is said:

"The petition was not assailed in the trial court, and the rule is that it should now receive a liberal construction with the view of giving effect to the pleader's purpose."

Counsel's argument directed to the alleged failure of the petition to state a cause of action is predicated on the averments found therein, wherein it is stated: "The plaintiff heard the said order of said conductor, and, intending to obey it in all respects, proceeded at once to alight from

the train upon the ground, which he did in proper, upright position, with his feet upon the ground, entirely outside of the car and train, and with face forward; and the plaintiff was then in a position and place of absolute safety to himself," etc. These allegations, it is urged, negative any possibility of liability on the part of the company for the injuries which were received by Kerr, because the conductor had no duty to perform in removing the plaintiff from the train, nor in preventing him from boarding it. The petition, as drawn, it is asserted, presents a case where a person standing opposite a train, not boarding it nor attempting to board it, is assaulted by the conductor. It is conceded that if the conductor should injure a person by the use of unnecessary force in taking him from a train or in resisting his attempt to board the train, the company could be held liable for his acts; but in this case it is urged there is presented simply the question of a servant going outside of his employment to assault a person. This view seems to us to be hardly justified by the pleadings. It omits consideration of an essential element which seems to be fairly, even though somewhat obscurely, stated, wherein it is averred that the plaintiff, the moment after alighting from said train, and before he had an opportunity to depart therefrom, or was able to turn and peaceably leave the side of the train, and to leave the railway of the defendant, came full into the arms of said conductor, and said conductor, in the continued performance of his duty to the defendant, then and there, wilfully, wantonly, negligently, etc., committed the acts complained of. Manifestly the purpose of the pleader was to allege facts showing that the plaintiff was not guilty of contributory negligence producing or contributing to produce the injury he suffered, and that his position was such as to avoid injury to himself by his own acts in leaving the railway train, but that while he was thus in the act of removing himself from the train in obedience to the command of the conductor, and after he had gotten to a place of comparative safety to himself in

his effort to extricate himself from the car under which he was riding, he was seized by the conductor for the purpose of ejecting him from the train and from the right of way, and of keeping him therefrom, and in doing so there was inflicted the personal injury for which a recovery is sought. This construction seems to have been given to the pleadings by the parties to the controversy, and we are disposed to hold, in view of the rule of liberal construction to which reference has been made, that the petition, when thus construed, states facts disclosing the liability of the master for the acts of the servant, and will support a judgment in the plaintiff's favor. Related to the rule of construction just considered is another, which is expressed in *National Fire Ins. Co. v. Eastern Building & Loan Ass'n*, 63 Neb. 698, where it is held that, "where a petition is assailed for the first time by a demurrer *ore tenus*, interposed at the close of the testimony, it will be construed liberally and in the light of the entire record," and "where, from the nature of the answer and the testimony adduced, it appears that both parties have placed the same construction on a petition, the court should not ignore such construction in passing on such demurrer, even though the petition standing alone might not admit of such construction."

We may also in this connection call attention to another rule of construction having a direct bearing on the question now being considered. Conceding that the petition is imperfect and ambiguous as to the situation of the parties when the assault is alleged to have been committed, the defendant by its answer has aided a defective petition and supplied the imperfection, so that the two pleadings, when construed in the light of each other, unmistakably, we think, justify the inference that the injury occurred before the plaintiff had disengaged himself from the train, and while he was in the act of so doing, either by his own action, or the action of the conductor, which is alleged as a basis of recovery. In view of the averments of the answer, the conductor was manifestly acting in the strict line of

the duties owing to his master, in seeing to it that the plaintiff was compelled to leave the train; and, as thus presented, the question of surpassing importance is whether the injury was occasioned by the wilful, wanton and negligent acts of the conductor in ejecting the trespasser, or by the negligence of the plaintiff in freeing himself from the car on which he was riding, in obedience to the command of the conductor to get off of and leave the train. The petition alleges that the injury was caused by the act of the conductor in ejecting him from the car under which he was riding, and the answer alleges that, by the force of his own movements in extricating himself from the car, he permitted his limb to fall on the rail and to be crushed by the wheel on the moving train. It is said by this court that a petition which is defective by reason of the omission of material facts therefrom will be aided and cured by the averments of such facts in the answer. *Railway O. & E. Accident Ass'n v. Drutmond*, 56 Neb. 235. "A defective or ambiguous petition may be aided and its infirmities cured by the averments of the answer." *Beebe v. Latimer*, 59 Neb. 305. It is difficult to perceive how it may be said that the plaintiff received the injury while in the unlawful act of stealing a ride, and while he was in the act of leaving the train, and at the same time be said that he had left the train and had ceased to be a trespasser, and that the conductor's acts as charged, conceding them to be true, were not done in the course of the performance of his duties as such.

2. Can the judgment be upheld and the plaintiff recover under the evidence? In respect of this question it is insisted that by plaintiff's own statement, assuming the truth of all that is said, it is conclusively established as a fact that the assault which it is alleged was committed by the conductor was not in the performance of any duty which he owed to the company, and was not an act for which the company is responsible. Counsel, in their briefs, say that it is fully admitted that if the conductor had made the assault for the purpose of putting the plain-

tiff, as a trespasser, off the train, or for the purpose of resisting an attempt to get on the train, such acts would be within the line of his duties, and for any improper conduct in that regard the company would be responsible; but, it is argued, if the alleged assault was not committed for the purpose of putting plaintiff off the train, or preventing him from boarding the train, then the assault would not be in the line of the duty of the conductor, but would be an act personal to him, for which the company is not responsible; and that the testimony of the plaintiff puts beyond peradventure of doubt the fact that the assault was not committed for the purpose of either removing him from the train, or preventing him from again boarding it. This contention is based on the theory that the plaintiff at the time of the alleged assault had left the train, and was manifesting no purpose or intention of returning or repeating the trespass he had committed, and for that reason the act of the conductor was not in the course of the performance of his duties. The conductor, in testifying, says he was about a car length from the plaintiff as he was getting off the truss bars on which he was riding; that he had hold of him when he was hurt; that the plaintiff was lying on the ground, and he pulled him away from the train; that the plaintiff was three or four feet from the wheel, and that he pulled him from under the train after the wheel had run over the one foot. The plaintiff says he heard the conductor halloo: "You boys get off of here and stay off of here." He testifies that, at the time, the conductor was about a car length ahead, and in the act of alighting from a freight car, down the side of which he had climbed. The plaintiff then says he immediately tried to get out, and got out; that he took hold of the post with his hands, his feet being out over the outside bar, and swung himself out from under the car; that he alighted on the ground all right, and the force he received while riding on the train caused him to run along two or three steps after getting off; that the conductor ran toward him; that he had his hands on the bar, to try to

turn out, and before he could turn out the conductor caught him; that he grabbed and shook him several times, and pretty severely; that he lost his footing; and that the conductor swung him around and the wheel passed over his foot; that the conductor pulled him out, and laid him down beside the track; and that he said to the conductor: "Now, see what you have done." On cross-examination the witness says he was entirely outside the car and train; that he was not aboard the car, nor was he trying to get on the car, but was trying to get out, and that he was standing or walking along the car after he had gotten off the truss rods; that he was outside of the car, not on nor trying to get on the car, and that only his hands were on the car; that while in this position he was assaulted by the conductor; that it was not necessary to assault him to get him off the car, and that he was not trying to get on the car, and that there was no assault to keep him from getting on the car, and that he was not trying to get on.

This evidence, drawn out on cross-examination, the substance of which we have given, is especially relied on to establish the essential fact contended for, to wit, that the conductor's assault was not within the scope of his duties, since it was neither for the purpose of putting the plaintiff off the train, nor for the purpose of preventing him from getting on the train. The record does not necessarily establish the fact contended for, nor are we to be governed solely by the statements of the witness as testified to on cross-examination, especially so, where, in order to ascertain the real and exact situation, reference must be had to his testimony preceding, as well as that which follows. It is from all that is said and testified to by him, reconciling all parts, wherever possible, that we may ascertain the truth of the matter in controversy. When so considered, we think the fair inference is that as the plaintiff was removing himself from under the car where he was riding, and after he had alighted on the ground in a position not altogether upright, but approximately so, and before he had freed himself from the train, and while his hands were

hold of the bars or rods where he had been riding, and as he was moving forward with the train, he came in contact with the conductor, who was traveling toward the rear of the train in order to drive him away, and who, seizing hold of him while yet in the position described, by throwing him around, threw his foot or limb on the rail and under the wheel, by reason of which he received the injury complained of. We are not to be understood as saying this is the literal truth, but there is evidence in the record tending to establish this state of facts, and sufficient to support the verdict of the jury, who obviously found such to be true. The plaintiff's companion, being somewhat older, testifies that, at the time or immediately preceding the injury, the plaintiff was "sitting kind of side-saddle like" on the truss rods, with his feet hanging over the outside rod; and that, while the conductor was coming toward the plaintiff, the witness saw him start to get out, and saw his feet on the ground; that his feet were on the ground, and he was in a kind of crouched position; that his hands were not on the ground. A brakeman, one of the defendant's witnesses, testifies that the plaintiff was lying by the side of the track as the conductor made a run or jump or spring toward the car under which the plaintiff had been riding. As to the contention that this evidence indisputably establishes the fact that the plaintiff had left the train, and had ceased to be a trespasser, and was making no attempt to again board it, we think it falls far short of proving such to be the case. Suppose the plaintiff had been riding on top of a freight car, and at the command of the conductor had descended the ladder at the side, with the view of leaving the train in obedience to the command, but just as he had alighted on the ground, and while yet hold of the ladder on which he had descended, and while outside of the train, and with no intention of returning to it, but while in the position mentioned, the conductor had seized him and thrown him in such a manner as to injure his person by the car passing over his limb, could it be successfully contended that the act of

the conductor was beyond the scope of the duties of the servant to his master, and for which no liability would attach to the latter? These two boys had been playing hide and seek with the trainmen. They had been dodging from side to side of the train in order to escape the trainmen, and steal a ride to Omaha. The conductor was endeavoring to prevent them from so riding, as it was his duty so to do. He was chasing them from the train. He was not only ejecting the plaintiff from the car on which he was riding at the time of the injury, but he was endeavoring to prevent him, as well as his companion, from riding on the train anywhere or in any position other than as regular passengers upon payment of fare. This was obviously his object in pursuing the plaintiff. This is why he seized, shook him, and swung him so that he lost his footing, if he did so. He had no personal ill will or malice toward the plaintiff, and so testifies. It was not for revenge nor for any other purpose than to prevent the plaintiff from riding in the manner he was endeavoring to ride, and from trespassing on the company's rights, that actuated the conductor in doing what he did at the time.

The fact that the plaintiff was not at the time trying to again board the train, or intending to do so, cannot materially affect the situation, or alter the rights, duties and liabilities of the respective parties. Such might be material, had the plaintiff entirely removed himself from the train and right of way, and for the time being ceased to be a trespasser, but he had not done this. He was still trespassing. He was yet hold of the car on which he had been riding. The act of removing himself from the train had not been completed. The act of the conductor, assuming the plaintiff's theory to be correct, was but one of a series of continuing acts set in motion with the view of ejecting the plaintiff from the train—a place where he had no business to be—and until the act had been fully completed, and the purpose for which the different acts were set in motion accomplished, the conductor was, as it seems to us, manifestly acting within the scope of

his employment, and in the furtherance of the interests and business of the master. It was his business to drive off trespassers, and to keep them off, and it was this very business he was engaged in when the acts of which complaint is made were performed. In brief, if the boy was hurt under the train, as he undoubtedly was, and as a part of the transaction of his riding on and attempting to leave the train when ordered so to do by the conductor, by what manner of reasoning is the inference warranted that he had left the train—had ceased to be a trespasser—and for that reason the conductor's acts were beyond the scope of his authority? If plaintiff was hurt while leaving the train, then it was his own or the conductor's wrong-doing that contributed to the injury, and if the latter, then the conclusion, we think, is irresistible that it was done in the course of the performance of his duties and in the line of his employment.

The general rule is that a master is liable for injuries to third persons arising from the negligence of his servant while in the lawful and authorized employment of the master. *Toledo, W. & W. R. Co. v. Harmon*, 47 Ill., 298; *Gray v. Portland Bank*, 3 Mass. 363; *Guss v. Coblens*, 43 Mo. 377; *Harriss v. Mabry*, 23 N. Car. 240. The authorities say a master is liable for the acts of his servant within the general scope of his employment while about his master's business, though the act be negligent, wanton, wilful, or malicious, and this is so though the act complained of has been expressly forbidden by the master. 4 Cur. Law, p. 608, and authorities cited. See also *Burns v. Glens Falls, S. H. & Ft. E. St. R. Co.*, 38 N. Y. Supp. 856; *Craker v. Chicago & N W. R. Co.*, 36 Wis. 657, and *Cohen v. Dry Dock E. B. & B. R. Co.*, 69 N. Y. 170. In the last case cited, in the opinion it is said:

"A master is liable for the wrongful act of his servant, to the injury of a third person, where the servant is engaged at the time in doing his master's business, and is acting within the general scope of his authority, although he is reckless in the performance of his duty, or through

lack of judgment or discretion, or from infirmity of temper, or under the influence of passion aroused by the circumstances, goes beyond the strict line of his duty, and inflicts unnecessary and unjustifiable injury."

On the other hand it is said: A master is not liable for a malicious or wanton act of a servant done outside of his employment, without regard to his services, and in order to effect some purpose of his own. *Mott v. Consumers' Ice Co.*, 73 N. Y. 543. In this same case, however, it is declared that "for the acts of a servant within the general scope of his employment, while engaged in his master's business, and done with a view to the furtherance of that business and the master's interests, the master is responsible, whether the act be done negligently, wantonly, or even wilfully."

Tested by the principle deducible from these authorities, there seems little room to doubt that the acts of the conductor alleged in the petition, and as testified to by the plaintiff, and for which the company is sought to be held responsible, if believed by the jury, were within the general scope of the employment of the servant, were committed while he was engaged in his master's business, and with a view to the furtherance of the business and interests of the master. This court in an early case has recognized and given expression to the rule adverted to, wherein it is held that a corporation is liable for acts committed in the course of the agent's employment, or in connection with the transaction of the business of the corporation. *Miller v. Burlington & M. R. R. Co.*, 3 Neb. 219. A case well in point is *Hamilton v. Chicago, M. & St. P. R. Co.*, 119 Ia. 650, 93 N. W. 594. There a conductor in ejecting a trespasser from the train, after he had climbed thereon the second or third time, seized him by the collar, slapped and beat him with his hand, then stopped the train and put the trespasser off. It is held that the beating administered by the conductor was within the line of his employment, and that the master was liable. In the opinion it is said:

"There is no question that if, in removing plaintiff as a trespasser, the defendant's conductor, who was charged with the duty of removing trespassers from the train, caused him to suffer personal injury by reason of attempting to put him off at a dangerous place or by using unreasonable and unnecessary violence, the defendant would be liable for his acts, even though they were wanton, wilful, malicious, and unlawful." Citing a number of authorities. "This proposition," continues the court, "is conceded by counsel for appellant, but he contends that the evidence shows the beating of the plaintiff to have been a separate and distinct transaction. * * * It was not as the result of any personal malice or ill will of the conductor, but because, as conductor, he was irritated by the conduct of plaintiff, and, as he declares, was actuated with the purpose of teaching the plaintiff a lesson, so that when he was put off he would stay off. There is nothing to indicate that the conductor, under pretense of discharging his duty as conductor, was taking the opportunity to injure plaintiff on account of his personal ill will. He was confessedly acting throughout as conductor—discharging the duty of preventing plaintiff, as a trespasser, from riding on the train. We think the case is plainly one where the wrongful acts of the conductor, if any, were chargeable to the defendant."

The same may be said of the facts in the case at bar. The conductor was manifestly acting through no personal ill will to the plaintiff. His acts were with the view of removing the plaintiff, as a trespasser, and to prevent a recurrence of the trespass. He was, if the plaintiff's story is believed, forcibly removing him from the train and from the position in connection therewith. He was occupying when the assault was committed, for the express purpose and with the sole object in view of preventing him from further riding on the train, which he was endeavoring to do, and to prevent a continuance of the trespass, and the act complained of was one of a series or a part of a continuous act brought about for this very

purpose. The case, as it appears to us, is clearly distinguishable from those cases holding the master not liable where the act of the servant is done outside of his employment and without regard to his services. The difficulty, of course, lies in applying the rule and drawing correctly the line which shall determine whether the act is within or without the scope of the duties of the servant in the course of his employment. In *Georgia R. & B. Co. v. Wood*, 47 Am. St. Rep. (Ga.) 146, cited by defendant in support of its contention, it appears that certain boys had been attempting to steal a ride upon a train, and that at the time of the act complained of they had left the train and right of way, and were standing in a yard on private property. A stone was thrown by one of the trainmen at one of the boys, which struck a girl who was standing on her father's porch. The company was held not liable because the act was not within the scope of the employment of the servant who was acting in the capacity of a brakeman. The court say that no presumption arises that the servant was acting within the scope of his employment in throwing a stone at this boy, with a view to injure him, after he had desisted from the trespass and gone off from the train. "If," say the court, "the brakeman, while these boys were engaged in the trespass, had, in attempting to prevent the trespass or cause them to desist, injured one of them through negligence or carelessness, or by using more force than was necessary for the purpose, the company would perhaps be liable. * * * But after the boy had desisted the company would not be responsible for an injury inflicted on him by the brakeman in attempting to punish him for the trespass." For like reason it is held in *Golden v. Newbrand*, 52 Ia. 59, that the master was not liable for the acts of the servant because, under the circumstances, they were not within the scope of the duties for which employed. In that case the servant was employed to protect property, the same being a brewery operated by the master. The party assaulted had thrown a brick into the brewery, striking some of the property

therein, and then turned and ran, when the servant, after chasing him some 15 or 20 feet from the building, shot the fleeing party in the back of the head. It is said by the court:

"We think the fact that the deceased was retreating from the brewery, at the time the fatal shot was fired, shows conclusively it was not fired for or with the intent of protecting the brewery, or in the line of Roenspeiss' duty. * * * To protect the brewery did not require Roenspeiss to shoot and kill a person who was retreating therefrom."

Davis v. Houghtellin, 33 Neb. 582, is also relied on. In that case the servant was employed to guard certain feed upon certain premises, and to seize and detain persons who might be found disturbing such feed. The party injured had occasion to be on the premises, and while there the servant, in attempting to seize and detain him, carelessly and negligently shot and killed him. There was no allegation that the third party was molesting the feed, or attempting to do so, and it was held that a demurrer to the petition was rightly sustained. The case, we think, in principle is clearly distinguishable from the one at bar. Other like cases are cited, but it will serve no useful purpose to advert to them at length. Suffice to say that the facts in these several cases on which the right to recover must rest are held to negative the idea that the servant at the time of the act complained of was acting in the line of his duty, and within the scope of the employment for which he was engaged. In such case the servant is held to be at the time when the injury was inflicted acting for himself and as his own master, and therefore the master employing him was not liable. The acts relied on as establishing the liability of the master in each instance are held not connected with the business in which the servant was engaged, and it is held that the relation of master and servant was for the time suspended. As we have attempted to elucidate in the case at bar, the acts of the servant which are made the basis for a recovery were

in the furtherance of the master's business, and with the view of discharging the duties of the servant owing to the master by ejecting the plaintiff as a trespasser, and preventing a recurrence of the trespass then being committed. This was in the line of his duty. It was a part of his employment. For the acts of the servant while so engaged, even though wanton, wilful, or unlawful, as is expressed by the authorities, the master is held liable. Entertaining, as we do, the views heretofore expressed, the conclusion is reached that the evidence is sufficient to sustain the verdict, and to disclose a liability on the part of the defendant company for the acts of the servant as alleged in the petition and proved by the evidence.

Finding no prejudicial error in the record, we are of the opinion that the judgment should be affirmed, and it is accordingly so ordered.

AFFIRMED.

PETER LADEAUX V. STATE OF NEBRASKA.

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 14,068.

1. **Larceny is a felonious taking and carrying away of the personal goods or chattels of another with intent to deprive the owner of his property therein and to appropriate the same to the use of the taker. Asportation, nonconsent of the owner, and a felonious intent to thereby convert the stolen property to the defendant's own use are necessary elements of larceny.**
2. **Evidence examined, and held insufficient to sustain a verdict of guilty of the crime charged in the information against the defendant in the case at bar.**

ERROR to the district court for Cherry county: WILLIAM H. WESTOVER, JUDGE. Reversed.

F. M. Walcott and A. M. Morrissey, for plaintiff in error.

Norris Brown, Attorney General, and W. T. Thompson, contra.

HOLCOMB, C. J.

From a judgment of conviction on a verdict of guilty of the crime of horse stealing, the defendant, an Indian, prosecutes error. He was informed against in the trial court for the larceny, with another, of several head of horses from a large pasture, where they were being grazed. The evidence is purely of a circumstantial nature. It is earnestly urged upon our attention that the evidence is wholly insufficient to support a verdict of guilty as against the defendant in this action. The other party was not tried on the information charging the defendant herein and such third party jointly with the crime. That the evidence would be sufficient to support a verdict as against the other party, had he been tried, is altogether clear. The defendant was prosecuted and convicted on the theory that he was found in the possession of stolen property soon after the commission of the crime, and that such possession was unexplained. A very thorough search of the evidence found in the bill of exceptions fails to disclose a scintilla of evidence showing that the defendant had possession of the stolen property, either actual or constructive, at any time after the commission of the theft, or that he exercised any control, authority or dominion over the stolen property, or made any attempt or effort to do so. There is nothing in the record to justify the inference that he had conspired with the other party to commit the theft, or that they were acting jointly or in concert regarding the control, possession and disposition of the property after the theft had been committed. The most that can possibly be said is that they were together a short time before the offense was committed, at a place where the defendant was well known, and in a neighborhood where he was accustomed to visit, and where his presence was altogether consistent with innocence, and that sometime after the commission of the offense he was again seen in company with the

undoubted offender while the latter was in the possession and trying to dispose of the horses that had previously been stolen. But the evidence shows that the defendant had been accustomed to visit this place also, and that he was well known there. There is some testimony in the record to the effect that, while some of the horses were being sold by the other party to certain purchasers then present, the defendant, being also present, was asked by the other party what he thought of the deal, and he answered in substance that he had nothing to do with it. It is suggested by counsel for the state that the defendant is protesting too much; that his answer evinces an undue anxiety to exculpate himself. In the absence, however, of any other evidence on which to base an inference of guilt, this answer is equally reconcilable with the truth of the statement, and may as well have been a spontaneous expression of one entirely disinterested in the transaction. All transactions, so far as disclosed by the record, respecting the sale of the stolen horses, and of the control and exercise of dominion over them, were by the other party, acting alone, and apparently on his own responsibility. Unless the stolen property can, under the evidence, be traced to the possession of the accused, or to the joint possession of him and the other party, it is manifest that the evidence is wholly insufficient to support a verdict as against him. This, as we have seen, it fails to do. Larceny is defined as "a felonious taking and carrying away of the personal goods or chattels of another with intent to deprive the owner of his property therein and to appropriate the same to the use of the taker. Asportation, nonconsent of the owner, and a felonious intent to thereby convert the stolen property to the defendant's own use are necessary elements of larceny." 2 Cur. Law, 696, and authorities cited. There is in the record in the case at bar nothing to show that the accused did any act showing an intent to either take or convert to his own use the property alleged to have been stolen. This essential element is wholly lacking. Evi-

dence that he in any way participated in the theft, or in the control or disposition of the stolen property, or that he gained or expected to gain any advantage, or that he endeavored so to do, is wholly lacking from any fact or circumstance that may be found in the record. The verdict, we think, is contrary to the law as laid down by the court in its instructions to the jury, wherein it is said: "To warrant a conviction, such a state of facts and circumstances must be shown that they are all consistent with the guilt of the defendant, and such as cannot upon any reasonable theory or hypothesis be true and the defendant be innocent." Every material fact sought to be established by the evidence may be accepted as a verity, and yet be entirely consistent with the innocence of the accused. Again, the jury were instructed that "before you can find the defendant guilty, you must be satisfied from the evidence, and beyond a reasonable doubt, that he participated in the commission of the offense charged. It is not enough that the defendant was in company of the man who sold the horses at the time such sale was made." Yet, this latter was all that was proved by the evidence as against the accused, except, as heretofore stated, he was in company with the person selling the stolen horses a short time before the crime was committed. Much latitude was allowed the prosecution in proving the guilt of the party with whom the accused is jointly charged with committing the offense, not only of the crime charged in the information, but also of other crimes of a similar nature. The undoubted tendency of the testimony was, in our judgment, to prejudice the accused in the eyes of the jury, and it is possible that he was convicted because he was in bad company, rather than because the evidence in the case at bar established beyond reasonable doubt his guilt of the crime charged in the information and for which he was tried. It is a very serious question whether nonconsent of the owner was proved; but, as the judgment of conviction must be reversed for the reasons stated, it becomes unnecessary to

rule upon the question. The judgment is reversed and the cause remanded.

REVERSED.

STATE ELECTRO-MEDICAL INSTITUTE V. L. M. PLATNER.

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,574.

Corporations: CONTRACTS. The contracts of a corporation to furnish the services of qualified and licensed physicians, members of the corporation or its agents, for an agreed compensation, are not prohibited by the statute nor against public policy, and the corporation may recover in its corporate name for services of duly qualified and licensed physicians furnished pursuant to such contracts.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: GUY R. C. READ, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

Edward J. Cornish and Nelson C. Pratt, for plaintiff in error.

Baldrige & De Bord, contra.

SEDGWICK, J.

This plaintiff in error made a contract in writing with the defendant in error whereby it agreed "to render professional services to the party of the second part, until the party of the second part shall be cured of a certain disease, as appears upon the books of the party of the first part." And the defendant on his part agreed to pay for the services a stipulated amount, and to "follow directions carefully, and take the medicine and remedies prescribed from time to time by the party of the first part, until a complete cure is effected." This contract was signed by the defendant, and was also signed "State Electro-Medical Institute, Physician in Charge." The plaintiff is a foreign corporation, and has an office and place of business in the city of Omaha. In the district

court the plaintiff set out the foregoing contract, and alleged that it was made on behalf of the plaintiff, "by and through its duly licensed and practicing physician," and alleged that it was doing business "by and through duly licensed and practicing physicians," and was organized for said purpose, and no other, and alleged that by and through L. H. Staples, a duly licensed and practicing physician, the plaintiff had partially performed the contract, and that the said physician, for and on behalf of the plaintiff, had been ready at all times, and is now ready and willing, to perform all the duties and obligations imposed by the terms of the contract, but the defendant has refused to perform. The plaintiff asks judgment for the amount due it upon the contract.

There was a general demurrer to this petition upon the ground that it did not state facts sufficient to constitute a cause of action, and also upon the ground that "said petition shows that the plaintiff is a corporation; that the contract forming the basis of the plaintiff's action is for medical services, and the plaintiff is incapacitated to render, or contract to render, or to sue for medical services." This demurrer was sustained, and judgment entered for the defendant, which judgment is brought here for review.

1. It is contended that a contract for medical services made by a corporation, to be performed by a licensed physician, is void, and that the corporation cannot recover upon such contract. The statute which forbids any person to practice medicine without first having obtained a license is quoted and discussed in *State Electro-Medical Institute v. State*, *post*, p. 40. The provision of the statute defining what is meant by the words "practice medicine" is also quoted and discussed, and the conclusion is reached that to make contracts such as the one in question here, and to collect compensation thereunder, does not constitute practicing medicine, as those words are used in this statute, and that therefore it is not forbidden to do these things without first being licensed.

2. The first ground set forth in the brief, from which it is there concluded that the plea of the plaintiff was insufficient, is stated as follows: "No person may practice medicine in the name of another, or under the direction and supervision of another." The case of *State v. Paul*, 56 Neb. 369, is cited. We think that this case holds the reverse of what seems to be contended for it. Dr. Bedell, who was the principal, and presumably the one with whom the contract for treatment was entered into, was qualified and duly licensed under the statute. The defendant Paul was an assistant of Dr. Bedell, and, being not qualified and licensed to practice, he assumed to perform surgical operations and administer remedies to the sick and infirm. It was held that he was not protected by the qualifications and license of Dr. Bedell, although he acted as his assistant and under his directions. The principle established by this decision is that the qualifications of one who practices medicine are personal qualifications, and that it is the one who actually performs the surgical operation or administers the remedy that must be qualified and licensed under the statute. The fact that the doctor who makes the contracts, who takes the patients and undertakes to treat them, is duly qualified and licensed is immaterial. This seems to be the doctrine of *State v. Paul*.

3. The next point urged is that "no person may profit by or enforce an agreement for the practice of medicine, except he is qualified and licensed for the practice of the profession." This construction of the act would prevent action in the name of any assignee of a physician's claim for his services, whether such assignee might be a corporation, a copartnership or an individual. Ordinarily a disqualifying statute is strictly construed. Unless its provisions plainly disqualify the plaintiff from maintaining the action, it ought not to be given that effect. There is no language of the statute in question that can be so construed, nor is there anything in the spirit and purpose of the legislation that requires such construction. This

question was mentioned in *Citizens' State Bank v. Nore*, 67 Neb. 69. It was said in the opinion in that case:

"While section 15 provides that 'no person shall recover,' the latter part of the section indicates that this prohibition is limited to the practitioner himself."

That is, no person shall recover upon such claim whether he be owner or assignee, or in whatever capacity he may claim to recover, unless "the practitioner himself" who performed the services was qualified and duly licensed at the time, and if the practitioner himself was qualified and duly licensed, the provision of the statute seems to be complied with.

The defendant cites the case of *Langdon v. Conlin*, 67 Neb. 243, as holding that one who is not licensed as an attorney and counselor at law cannot recover fees earned by an attorney who is licensed. That case is supposed to be authority for the proposition that a copartnership composed of one who is a licensed attorney and one who is not cannot recover for legal services furnished by the licensed attorney. But the case is not authority for such proposition. The point decided in the case is stated in the syllabus. It is contrary to public policy for one who is not an attorney at law to contract with one who is, for a share of the fees earned, to procure clients for him, who shall employ him to prosecute legal proceedings for them. Such contracts would tend to the encouragement of litigation, and the law will not recognize and enforce them. But if one who is not a licensed attorney is engaged in a collection or other similar business, we know of no principle of public policy that would prevent the formation of a copartnership between such a person and a licensed attorney, whereby it should be agreed that each would carry on his own particular business—the attorney at law practicing his profession—and that the earnings of both should belong to the copartnership. If it was distinctly understood that the practice of law should be carried on entirely by the licensed member of the firm, there seems to be no principle of public policy that would

make such a contract unlawful. *Harland v. Lilienthal*, 53 N. Y. 438.

There is perhaps some language used in the opinion in *Langdon v. Conlin* that might be supposed to support the defendant's contention, and yet it is plainly stated in the opinion that there is but one proposition necessary to discuss, "and that is whether or not this contract is against public policy and good morals and therefore void." The provision of the statute (sec. 5, ch. 7, Comp. St. 1903; Ann. St. 3604), prescribes it to be the duty of a licensed attorney "to counsel or maintain no other actions, proceedings, defenses, than those which appear to him legal and just, except the defense of a person charged with a public offense," and "not to encourage the commencement or continuance of an action or proceeding from any motive of passion or interest," and it is said in the opinion:

"Under a statute with no more stringent regulations governing the practice of law than our own, a contract on all fours with the one in the instant case was declared void, as against public policy and good morals, in *Alpers v. Hunt*, 86 Cal. 78, 9 L. R. A. 483, 21 Am. St. Rep. 17, 24 Pac. 846. The case is supported in principle by the holdings in *Burt v. Place*, 6 Cow. (N. Y.) 430; *Munday v. Whissenhunt*, 90 N. Car. 458. Where, as in the case at bar, a part of the consideration of the contract in issue was an agreement to furnish evidence in litigation to be commenced, the supreme court of New York, in *Lyon v. Hussey*, 82 Hun (N. Y.), 15, 31 N. Y. Supp. 281, said: 'It is clear that such a contract is against public policy. The recognition of contracts of this character would be the introduction of all sorts of fraud and deception in proceedings before courts of justice, in order that parties might receive compensation out of the results of their successful manufacture of proofs to be presented to the court, thus holding out a premium upon subornation. The mere statement of the proposition seems to show that such a contract could never be recognized in any court of justice.'"

This language puts the decision in that case strictly upon the point stated in the syllabus. It is the only point determined in the case.

In *Alpers v. Hunt*, 86 Cal. 78, the contract sued upon was in substance this: A third person, not an attorney and counselor at law, enters into an agreement with an attorney and counselor at law that he will procure his employment by a litigant, and that in consideration of such procurement he is to have from the attorney and counselor so employed one-third part of whatever remuneration the attorney received for his services from the litigant; and it was held that such a contract was contrary to public policy and void. It will be noticed that the contract was to procure a certain person to entrust a particular litigation to the attorneys, and for this service one-third of the fee from the client was to be paid. The court said:

"Now, if either of the attorneys who contracted with Bolte had lent to the latter his name to be used by him as attorney and counselor, he would have been guilty of a violation of the clause above quoted. * * * Was not Bolte really allowed to use their names in the prosecution of a matter in litigation?"

The principle involved is the same as in *Langdon v. Conlin*, *supra*. It is against public policy for attorneys to employ one not licensed to procure clients for them. It is equally against public policy to allow one who is not licensed to use the name of a licensed attorney in the prosecution of a matter in litigation. This latter was because the statute of California expressly forbids such practice, and it was thought that the contract involved amounted to agreeing that an unlicensed person should prosecute litigation in the name of a licensed attorney. This case is not authority for the proposition that a corporation composed of licensed attorneys could not recover in the name of the corporation for legal services rendered by such attorneys. At all events the statute under consideration here cannot be construed to prevent

licensed practitioners of medicine to form a corporation, and to make contracts with their patients in the corporate name. If one or more of the incorporators should not be licensed physicians the case would not be different. The person who practices medicine, that is, who undertakes to judge the nature of disease, or to determine the proper remedy therefor, or to apply the remedy, must have the necessary qualifications and obtain license. No recovery can be had for the services of any physician who is not so qualified. A hospital which is controlled by a corporation, and which receives patients, and contracts to care for them and to furnish them with medical attendance, does not by so doing practice medicine within the meaning of this act. It is said that, if a corporation can make such contracts without obtaining a license, it will be within the power of its officers, who are not licensed to be physicians, and over whom the state board of health has no control, to obtain a fee upon the assurance that a manifestly incurable disease can be permanently cured. In other words, that a corporation may conduct itself as a physician may not; that it may do things that would be a sufficient ground for the state board of health to revoke the license of a physician if done by him, and that the purpose of the legislature was to prevent such action. Whether a physician who allowed a corporation to make such contracts for his services, or who associated himself with, and practiced in pursuance of contracts made by, corporations that indulged in conduct that would be unprofessional if done by a physician, might himself be made responsible for these acts of the corporation, and so subject himself to the penalties of this act, it is not necessary in this case to determine. This contract is signed by the "Physician in Charge." He would seem to be as much responsible for this contract, and his own action under it, as if he had executed the contract in his own name. Would the same be true of any physician who, being in the employ of this defendant, should practice medicine pursuant to this contract? If

further legislation is necessary to regulate and control the conduct of such corporations, and of physicians connecting themselves with such corporations, the argument should be addressed to the legislature. We cannot derive such legislation from any public policy indicated by the provisions of this act.

It is further suggested that one of the grounds for revoking the license of a practicing physician is unprofessional conduct in the betrayal of professional secrets, and that there is no restriction upon a corporation that might obtain such secrets and betray them. Such secrets are imparted for the purpose of enabling the physician who treats the patient to understand the nature of his disease and to determine the best course of treatment. No self-respecting physician would encourage the curiosity of his clerks or assistants in attempting to discover the secrets of his patients, and if he participated in such conduct, or knowingly consented to its exercise, he might furnish grounds for the revoking of his license. If the patient saw fit to divulge his secrets to the assistants or agents without the knowledge of the physician, he would be supposed by so doing to indicate his willingness that they be published to the world.

As was said in *State Electro-Medical Institute v. State, supra*, making such contracts as the one involved herein, and collecting compensation for services of qualified and licensed physicians rendered pursuant to such contract, do not constitute practicing medicine and are not in violation of the statute or public policy.

The judgment of the district court is therefore reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

REVERSED.

BARNES, J., dissents.

ANNA W. SHEIBLEY V. JOHN M. HURLEY ET AL.**FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,613.**

1. **Public Officers: FEES.** The statute allowing a public officer a fee of twenty-five cents for "each certificate and seal" does not contemplate that the officer must formulate a statement of facts to which he certifies. If he, upon request, performs such service, he will be entitled to reasonable compensation therefor. The fee allowed by the statute is for the act of certifying to the paper and affixing his seal thereto.
2. ———: ———. The clerk of the district court cannot be required to search the records of his office to ascertain what liens, if any, exist against lands described in an abstract of title, and make and enter upon the abstract a compilation and statement of the result of such search. If he performs such service, he is entitled to reasonable compensation for making such statement and entering it upon the abstract. He is not entitled to a fee for making a search of his records necessary to the performance of another service "to which a fee is attached."
3. **Illegal Fees: ACTION FOR PENALTY.** Section 34, chapter 28, Compiled Statutes, 1903, prescribing a penalty for taking illegal fees by a public officer is highly penal. In an action to recover such penalty, if it appears that the fee received was exacted by the officer for services that he was not required to render as such officer, and for which he was entitled to reasonable compensation, together with other services for which it would have been illegal to exact a fee, it will not be presumed (in the absence of proof upon that point) that the fee exacted was more than the service for which he was entitled to compensation was reasonably worth.

ERROR to the district court for Dixon county: GUY T. GRAVES, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

***W. E. Gantt*, for plaintiff in error.**

McCarthy & McCarthy and John V. Pearson, contra.

SEDGWICK, J.

The plaintiff below, who is plaintiff in error here, brought this action to recover from the defendant, as clerk of the district court for Dixon county, several pen-

alties for taking fees alleged to be illegal. The petition sets up several different counts, alleging as many different causes of action, and in each count it is alleged: "Plaintiff presented to the said John M. Hurley, clerk of the district court in and for said Dixon county, an abstract of title to (naming the land), and demanded from him a certificate, under his hand and seal, certifying that the liens and incumbrances shown in said abstract were all that were of record in the office of the clerk of the district court for Dixon county, Nebraska, or certifying that there were none," with an allegation that the defendant demanded from and collected for making said certificate an amount stated in each count, which amount "was illegally taken and was in excess of the fee provided by law." The amount stated is in each count more than twenty-five cents, which the statute prescribes as the fee for certificate and seal. The answer denies each allegation not expressly admitted, and denies specifically that the charges were made for "certificate and seal," and alleges that in each and every cause of action stated in the petition the plaintiff "brought to the defendant, John M. Hurley, a memorandum, or sketch, of the chain of title to the real estate respectively mentioned and described in the several causes of action stated in plaintiff's petition, showing the transfers of title thereof as shown by the numerical index and records of the office of the county clerk of said county, and requested the defendant to make a search and examination of the books, records and files of his office and of the district court for said county, and to make and indorse on said memorandum an abstract of each and every suit, proceeding, decree, judgment, transcript of judgment, execution, attachment or incumbrance of any kind, or affecting the real estate described in the caption of said memorandum, if any, which were at the time liens upon, or in any way affected the title to said real estate, as shown by the books, files and records of his office, certified by him as clerk of said court." The answer then sets out in detail the search

that the clerk was compelled to make of his records and documents in his office, and then alleges "that for the said examination and abstract he charged a uniform fee of fifteen cents for each name appearing in said chain of title, together with a fee of twenty-five cents, and no more, for this certificate and seal attached thereto," with an allegation that these were acts not required by law of the defendant in performance of his official duty, and a further allegation that the services rendered were well worth the sum charged. The pleadings in the case are very lengthy. They are somewhat complicated. The answer contains some inconsistent allegations; and the reply alleges that the charge in excess of twenty-five cents for the seal was made for a search of the records. This allegation of course is inconsistent with the petition, and is a departure therefrom. There are also some inconsistent statements in the evidence. In some instances it is stated by both parties that the charges in excess of twenty-five cents for the certificate and seal were made as compensation for the search of the records. There is no objection made in this court that the allegations of the reply constitute a departure from the causes of action alleged in the petition, or that the allegations of the answer are inconsistent with themselves. The cause was evidently tried below as though the evidence was properly admissible under the issues, and that no variance existed between the allegations and the proof. The cause has been presented upon the same theory here, and we think it ought therefore to be determined upon that theory. The testimony of the plaintiff and the defendant is substantially the same, and it appears from the whole evidence that when these documents were presented to the defendant for his certificate, it was contemplated that an abstract statement of the result of the clerk's search of his records should be entered thereon by him, and a formal certificate appended, to which the clerk was expected to add his signature and the seal of his office.

The determination of this case then depends upon

Shelbley v. Hurley.

whether the clerk can be required to enter such a compilation upon the documents, and formulate a certificate thereto, and attach his signature and seal, for the compensation of twenty-five cents. If the theory contended for by the plaintiff is correct, then any statement, however lengthy or however much in detail, that might be prepared from the records of the clerk's office could be presented to the clerk, and he could be compelled to certify how much of the statement was true and how much false, and would be entitled to a fee of twenty-five cents for his certificate and seal. The certificate which the defendant made and for which he was entitled to charge is treated in the brief, and apparently was so treated by all parties upon the trial, as meaning the whole paper and its contents upon which the certificate is placed. It would seem rather to apply only to the act of certifying to the paper. When an abstractor of titles, who is himself a public officer under the law, has prepared a document purporting to be an abstract of title, which is complicated and may involve several descriptions of land, and many conveyances of each piece of land, and recites upon this document that there are no judgments against any of the grantors of any of the pieces of land that are or might become a lien thereon, can he present such a document to the clerk of the district court, and demand that the clerk certify that all of the statements are true, and receive as compensation therefor twenty-five cents for such certificate? It seems clear that the clerk ought to be able to protect himself against such an unjust exaction. The clerk is no doubt required by law to make certified transcripts from his record when the same are demanded and his fees tendered therefor; but in such case he is entitled to fees not only for his certificate but for his transcript as well. One who requires such a transcript cannot prepare it from the records himself and compel the clerk to certify thereto. He is under no obligations to certify to the truth of statements made or prepared by other parties, and if he consents to do so, he may, no

doubt, impose reasonable terms for his services. If he certifies to such statements on condition that he shall be paid for his services the same fee that he would have been entitled to if he had prepared the statement of facts himself, and had certified to its correctness, he violates no law in so doing.

Certainly the defendant could not be required to perform the services required of him in this case for the compensation to which he is entitled for his certificate and seal. As before pointed out, the clerk was expected to make a compilation upon these documents of the result of his searches of his records. Just how extensive these compilations would necessarily be, is not clearly shown in the evidence. This work was no part of the duties of his office, and if he consented to perform it, he might, of course, make such reasonable charges therefor as he saw fit. The evidence, however, clearly shows that the charge which he did make was intended to cover the work of searching the records, as well as the making of these compilations upon the abstracts, and formulating the statements of fact to which he was expected to certify. Of course, he could not charge in this case a fee for making a search of his record. The statute, after prescribing other fees of the district court, provides: "Every search made by the clerk, where no other service is rendered to which any fee is attached, fifteen cents." Sec. 3, ch. 28, Comp. St. 1903 (Ann. St. 9029). In *McCaraher v. Commonwealth*, 5 Watts and Serg. (Pa.) 21, 39 Am. Dec. 106, the court said:

"No stronger evidence can be given of the duty of an officer, than that the law gives him a fee for the performance of it."

Even if it should be thought that this statute imposes no duty upon the clerk to make search of his records, still it clearly authorizes him as such clerk to make such search, and in a proper case to make a charge therefor. If, therefore, he does at the request of an individual make such search, his fees for so doing are, without any

doubt, regulated by this provision of the statute. It is equally clear that the statute, by saying that he may have a fee for searching the record "where no other service is rendered to which any fee is attached," forbids him to take a fee for such service when that condition does not exist. As already seen, it was for this search for which he was not allowed to charge, and for other services for which he was entitled to compensation, that he received the fee of fifteen cents. There is no evidence in the record to show the value of the service for which he was entitled to charge. If these services were really worth more than the amount charged, the fact that he supposed that he was also entitled to compensation for making the search of his records, and that he accepted this fee as compensation for that service also, ought not in an action so highly penal as this to be treated as a violation of the statute. Demanding and receiving illegal fees by a public officer is deemed a *quasi* criminal act. If the amount involved is so small as fifteen cents, or even less, the officer is subjected to a penalty of \$50. Under such a statute, all reasonable presumptions of innocence ought to be indulged, and we will not presume that the services rendered for which he was entitled to charge were of less value than the amount he received therefor.

We think, therefore, that the district court was right in instructing the jury to return a verdict for the defendant. The judgment is therefore

AFFIRMED.

BANKERS UNION OF THE WORLD V. BRICE F. MIXON.

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,744.

1. **Insurance: FALSE STATEMENTS.** An untrue representation in an application for insurance will not vitiate the policy unless it is of such a nature that it might have been an inducement to issue

the policy. If it appears from the whole record that the representation could not have been relied upon by the insurer it will be disregarded.

2. **Waiver.** It is competent for the insured to waive all claim under the policy in case of death resulting from smallpox, and to make such waiver binding upon the beneficiary under the policy by apt words for that purpose expressed in the application.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: **WILLARD W. SLABAUGH, JUDGE.** *Reversed.*

Matthew Gering, for plaintiff in error.

J. L. Kaley, *contra*.

SEDGWICK, J.

The defendant in error, Brice F. *Mixon*, as plaintiff in the court below, recovered a judgment against the plaintiff in error upon a beneficiary certificate issued upon the life of plaintiff's father, William Riley *Mixon*. The insured was a resident of Louisiana, and died on the 12th day of February, 1900. It is admitted that he paid the dues regularly, and complied with all of the provisions of the contract upon his part to be performed; but the defendant insists that the plaintiff is not entitled to recover in this action because of an alleged misstatement made in the application for the insurance, and because the insured waived all benefits under the beneficiary certificate in case of his death resulting from smallpox, of which disease the defendant alleges the insured died. There is some discussion in the brief in regard to the waiver or enforcement of forfeitures of insurance policies, but these discussions are foreign to this issue, as no question of forfeiture is involved.

1. The first question presented in the briefs is upon the objection of the defendant that the insurance is void because of a misstatement of fact in the application. One of the questions asked of the applicant was: "Have you been successfully vaccinated?" to which his answer was:

"No"; and it is insisted by the defendant that the evidence shows that the applicant had at that time been successfully vaccinated, and that therefore his statement was false, which invalidates the insurance. It is difficult to understand how the defendant can seriously urge such a contention. If we suppose that it is conclusively shown that the applicant, just prior to making this statement, had been successfully vaccinated, and that therefore the statement was unquestionably untrue, there is nothing in this record from which it might be found that such a statement was material to the risk, or that the defendant relied thereon. In *Kettenbach v. Omaha Life Ass'n*, 49 Neb. 842, the law is stated to be:

"In order for such representations to constitute a defense to this action, it is incumbent upon the insurance company to plead and prove that the statements and answers were made as written in the application; that they were false; that they were false in some particular material to the insurance risk; that they were made intentionally by the insured; and that the insurance company relied and acted upon such statements."

This statement of the law has since been many times approved. *Royal Neighbors of America v. Wallace*, 66 Neb. 543; and upon rehearing of this last case, 5 Neb. (Unof.) 519, 73 Neb. 409.

It appears from the record that it was the policy of the company not to insure against death by smallpox unless the insured had been successfully vaccinated, and therefore it is affirmatively shown by this record that the company in contracting this insurance did not rely upon the applicant's statement that he had not been successfully vaccinated. It is enough to defeat this objection if the defendant has failed to make it appear that this statement of the applicant furnished some inducement of the company to enter into the contract.

2. Following the answer of the applicant that he had not been successfully vaccinated, the application contained these words: "If not, sign waiver. Waiver. I

agree to waive all benefits under a benefit certificate which may be issued to me, in case of my death or total or permanent disability resulting from smallpox. W. R. Mixon. Applicant to sign name in full. William Riley Mixon."

The defendant insists that the death of the insured resulted from smallpox, and that, by reason of the foregoing waiver, this loss was not insured against. The suggestion of the plaintiff that this waiver was not binding upon the beneficiary is without foundation, since it waives benefits in case of death, and such benefits could accrue to no one except the beneficiary under the certificate. It is also suggested by the plaintiff that fraternal beneficiary companies cannot contract for such waivers of liability. No reason is given upon which to base such a suggestion, and we are not aware of any. The right of the parties to so limit their contracts was recognized in *Sovereign Camp W. O. W. v. Woodruff*, 80 Miss. 546, 32 So. 4.

The question, then, is whether the death of the insured resulted from smallpox. This case was tried by the court without the intervention of a jury, upon documentary evidence, a part of which was an agreed statement of facts submitted in lieu of the oral evidence of witnesses. In this statement of facts it is stipulated that Dr. J. W. Lambert, the medical examiner of the company, would testify "that smallpox was prevalent in the community where Mixon lived at the time of his death, and that Mixon died of smallpox." It is also stipulated that six other witnesses named in the stipulation "would swear upon the stand, if personally present, that the deceased, William Riley Mixon, died of smallpox." It is also stipulated that the plaintiff and five other witnesses "would testify, if personally present, that the deceased died of a complication of diseases, viz., pneumonia and smallpox," and "that the only medical witness who testified as to the disease which caused the death of Mixon was Dr. J. W. Lambert, the medical examiner of defendant order." Upon this evidence the trial court found that the insured

died of smallpox. The trial court entered judgment for plaintiff on account of the erroneous conclusion that the fact that the death resulted from smallpox was immaterial. We think that the evidence abundantly supports the special finding of the cause of death. Smallpox was prevalent in the community at the time. All of the witnesses agreed that the deceased was afflicted with smallpox at the time of his death. The stipulation is that some would testify that he died of smallpox complicated with pneumonia, and some would testify unqualifiedly that he died of smallpox. This stipulation shows that the insured was afflicted with smallpox, which resulted in his death, and under the conditions of his insurance there can be no recovery.

The judgment of the district court is therefore reversed and the cause remanded.

REVERSED.

STATE ELECTRO-MEDICAL INSTITUTE V. STATE OF NEBRASKA.

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 14,090.

1. **Corporations: PRACTICE OF MEDICINE: LICENSES.** While a corporation is a person in a certain sense, and for many purposes is so considered, it is not such a person as can be licensed to practice medicine under chapter 55, Compiled Statutes, 1903.
2. **Physicians.** The qualification of a medical practitioner is personal to himself. The intention and meaning of the law is that one who undertakes to judge the nature of disease, or to determine the proper remedy therefor, or to apply or direct the application of the remedy, must have the personal qualifications prescribed by statute.
3. **Corporations: PHYSICIANS.** Qualified and licensed physicians may form a corporation, and make contracts for the services of its members and other licensed physicians. Making such contracts, and furnishing services of qualified and licensed physicians thereunder, is not a violation of section 7, chapter 55, Compiled Statutes, 1903, forbidding the practice of medicine without a license.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: ALEXANDER C. TROUP, JUDGE. *Reversed and dismissed.*

Edson Rich and Nelson C. Pratt, for plaintiff in error.

Baldrige & De Bord and W. W. Slabaugh, contra.

SEDGWICK, J.

This was an information in the nature of quo warranto to prevent the defendant from doing business in this state. According to the pleadings and stipulation of facts, the defendant is a foreign corporation, and has an office in the city of Omaha, and transacts its business there. It is alleged in the information:

"Said defendant is engaged in the business of practicing medicine for hire, and it contracts to, and through its agents does, assume for hire to practice medicine, prescribe for and treat the physical ailments of human beings, and does by and through its officers and agents and employees practice medicine for hire for its benefit, and for hire does operate upon and prescribe for and treat the physical ailments of human beings. The said defendant does solicit the public to come to the said defendant for treatment for physical diseases, and does advertise in the several papers published in the city of Omaha and otherwise that it treats various physical diseases." The answer admits that the plaintiff advertises to treat diseases for hire, and makes contracts to that effect, and accepts compensation therefor, and alleges: "The said defendant at all of the times mentioned in plaintiff's petition, and for a long time prior thereto, is now conducting its business by physicians who were duly licensed to practice medicine; that each and all of the physicians so employed had filed their certificates with the county clerk of Douglas county, Nebraska, and that each and all of said physicians were and are duly au-

thorized to perform each and all acts incumbent upon them under their said licenses; that the said defendant does not assume to nor does it practice medicine, prescribe for or treat persons afflicted with physical ailments, but that said business is conducted solely by duly licensed and practicing physicians in the employ of the defendant." The reply denied this allegation, but it is admitted in the stipulation of facts upon which the case was tried.

Section 715 of the code provides: "If a corporation be found to have violated the law by which it holds its existence, * * * judgment shall be rendered that such defendant be ousted, and altogether excluded from such office, franchise, or privilege."

1. The contention is that this defendant has violated chapter 55 of the Compiled Statutes (Ann. St. 9416-9492), the title of which is "An act to establish a State Board of Health, to regulate the practice of medicine," etc. The particular provision which it is claimed has been violated is the one in section 7 of that act: "It shall be unlawful for any person to practice medicine, surgery or obstetrics or any of the branches thereof, in this state, without first having applied for and obtained from the state board of health a license so to do." It is conceded that this defendant has not obtained, and could not obtain, a license in compliance with this provision of the law. While a corporation is in some sense a person, and for many purposes is so considered, yet it is not such a person as can be licensed to practice medicine. This position seems to be maintained by both parties. The defendant, therefore, not having a license, has violated this law if it has practiced medicine, surgery or obstetrics or any of the branches thereof within the meaning of the statute. The statute in section 17 of the act attempts to define what is meant by practicing medicine: "Any person shall be regarded as practicing medicine within the meaning of this act who shall operate or profess to heal or prescribe for or otherwise treat any physical or mental

ailment of another." Exception is made of the "administration of ordinary household remedies," and in some other cases. The supreme court of Kansas has said:

"The practice of medicine may be said to consist in three things: First, in judging the nature, character, and symptoms of the disease; second, in determining the proper remedy for the disease; third, in giving or prescribing the application of the remedy to the disease." *Underwood v. Scott*, 43 Kan. 714, 23 Pac. 942.

There was no necessity of legislation to prohibit corporations, as such, from practicing medicine. It is impossible to conceive of an impersonal entity "judging the nature, character, and symptoms of the disease," or "determining the proper remedy," or giving or prescribing the application of the remedy to the disease. Members of the corporation, or persons in its employ, might do these things, but the corporation itself is incapable to do them. The qualification of a medical practitioner is personal to himself. The intention of the law is that one who undertakes to judge the nature of a disease, or to determine the proper remedy therefor, or to apply the remedy, must have certain personal qualifications, and if he does these things without having complied with the law he is subject to its penalties. Making contracts is not practicing medicine. Collecting the compensation therefor is not practicing medicine within the meaning of this statute. No professional qualifications are requisite for doing these things.

2. It is urged that no one who is not himself licensed to practice can be beneficially interested in the practice of medicine, and that it is contrary to public policy, and therefore unlawful, for a person or corporation not competent to practice medicine to be beneficially interested in such practice, and to be allowed to receive compensation for the services of one who is qualified. This question and others that are discussed in the brief in this case are more fully considered in the opinion in the case of *State Electro-Medical Institute v. Platner*, ante, p. 23.

It seems clear that this defendant has not practiced or attempted to practice medicine within the meaning of this statute, and is not guilty of the violation of the law charged against it. The judgment of the district court is therefore reversed and the cause dismissed.

REVERSED.

BARNES, J., dissents.

EDWIN A. PHELPS ET AL. V. LOUISA WOLFF.

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,859.

1. **Judgment: NUNC PRO TUNC ENTRY.** The district court may enter a judgment *nunc pro tunc* on motion and notice, and the fact that the application therefor is not made for a considerable time after the judgment was rendered does not deprive the court of jurisdiction.
2. **Foreclosure: LACHES.** A plaintiff in a foreclosure suit, who appears to have been diligent in endeavoring to subject the mortgaged property to the payment of the mortgage debt and procure a deficiency judgment, and who, to that end, has proceeded as rapidly as the nature of the case and the rules of procedure will permit, cannot be said to be guilty of laches.
3. **Judgment: NUNC PRO TUNC ENTRY.** An entry made by the clerk of the district court, which has been held by this court insufficient to constitute a final judgment, is not sufficient to constitute a bar to an application for the entry of a judgment *nunc pro tunc*.
4. ———: **FINDINGS.** Such a judgment, however, must conform to and be no broader in its terms than the judgment actually rendered; and where the decree so entered contains findings not supported by the evidence introduced on the hearing of the application for its entry, it will be reversed as to such findings.

ERROR to the district court for Colfax county. CONRAD HOLLENBECK, JUDGE. *Judgment modified.*

George W. Wertz, for plaintiffs in error.

George H. Thomas, contra.

BARNES, J.

This is a proceeding in error to reverse an order of the district court for Colfax county directing the entry of a decree *nunc pro tunc* in a foreclosure suit.

It appears that one Louisa Wolf commenced an action to foreclose a mortgage on certain real estate situated in Colfax county, in the district court for that county against Goodwin W. Phelps, Oweda Phelps, Julius F. Phelps, Charles J. Phelps and Edwin A. Phelps, and on the 7th day of December, 1895, obtained a decree against them. The judge's notes of the rendition of the decree appear on the court calendar of that date as follows: "Default as to all defendants except as to Julius F. Phelps. Amt. due plff. \$802.87, to draw int. at 10 per cent. Decree of foreclosure accordingly, and order of sale in default of payment for twenty days." That thereafter the clerk journalized the decree, as shown by the court journal, in the words and figures following: "*Louisa Wolff v. Goodwin W. Phelps et al.* Now on this 7th day of December, A. D. 1895, this cause came on for hearing and trial to the court, and the defendants Oweda Phelps, Goodwin W. Phelps, Charles J. Phelps and Edwin A. Phelps, having failed to answer or demur, were each three times called in open court, but came not, and thereby made default, and default is hereby entered against them. On consideration whereof the court finds that there is due the plaintiff from the defendant the sum of \$802.87, which said amount draws interest at the rate of ten per cent. per annum, and the sheriff is hereby ordered to advertise and sell said premises according to law, in default of payment for twenty days." The foregoing is the only decree or judgment in that action that appears in the records of the court. The defendant, Goodwin W. Phelps, at that time applied for and obtained a stay of order of sale, and, after the expiration of such stay, the real estate described in the mortgage was offered for sale, but not sold for want of bidders. Sometime afterwards

the property was sold by the sheriff for the satisfaction of the decree, the sale confirmed, and thereupon the plaintiff applied to the court for a deficiency judgment. Her application was denied, and she appealed to the supreme court, where the order of the trial court was affirmed, for the reason that it did not appear from the record that any final judgment or decree had ever been rendered by the trial court. 3 Neb. (Unof.) 511. After the cause was remanded, the plaintiff filed a motion in the district court for the entry of a proper decree *nunc pro tunc*. Notice of the application was duly served. The defendants appeared and objected to the entry of such decree, and by their objections, among other things, denied all of the allegations contained in the plaintiff's application. Thereupon, a trial was had, and after the introduction of the evidence in support of the application, the court made an order directing the clerk to enter a decree of foreclosure as of the date of December 7, 1895. To this order the defendants excepted, and to reverse the decree the defendants, Edwin A. Phelps and Charles J. Phelps, prosecute error.

The plaintiffs in error contend that the defendant has been guilty of gross laches in permitting the journal to stand in its present condition for more than eight years. It appears from the record that the defendant has been striving to enforce the decree and obtain a deficiency judgment from the date of its rendition to the present time; that the property was sold as soon as a purchaser could be found in the ordinary course of procedure; that the sale was confirmed, and the defendant herein promptly made application for a deficiency judgment; that her application was denied, and from that order she prosecuted error to this court. She then ascertained for the first time that no final judgment or decree of foreclosure had been entered in the records of the trial court, and for that reason the order of the court denying her a deficiency judgment was affirmed. As soon as the cause was remanded, the proceeding, which is the foundation of the

present action, was commenced, and resulted in the entry of the decree which is now complained of. So it cannot be successfully urged that she has been guilty of laches, as claimed by the plaintiffs.

It is also contended that the former judgment is still in force; that a new judgment cannot be entered until such former judgment is disposed of in some manner, and that the defendant herein is estopped to deny the correctness of the old entry as made. There is nothing in this contention, and it comes with poor grace from one who has heretofore sought and obtained a judgment of this court by which it is held, in effect, that no final decree had been entered in this case prior to the time of the entry of the one now complained of.

The plaintiffs further contend that the evidence is not sufficient to support the judgment or decree complained of. This presents a more serious question. As before stated, all of the allegations of the application were denied by the plaintiffs' objections. The defendant herein introduced as evidence in support of her application, first, the judge's notes found in the court calendar of the date of December 7, 1895; second, the journalizing of the same made by the clerk; both of which entries are quoted above. She also introduced the application of Goodwin W. Phelps for a stay of order of sale, together with the evidence of George H. Thomas, as follows: "I was in court on the 7th day of December, 1895; Judge Marshall presiding. I heard him pronounce the decree in this case, and at the same time he made entry thereof in the district court calendar. After he had made the entry in the court calendar, he read what he had written and entered therein. I will state that I am well acquainted with the signature of Goodwin W. Phelps; that the signature attached to exhibit A (which is the request for a stay of order of sale) is his signature. I am well acquainted with the handwriting in the body of this instrument, exhibit A, and I will state that the same is in the handwriting of one Ethal L. Robins." The above and foregoing

includes all of the evidence offered by the defendant in support of her application. We are satisfied that this evidence is sufficient to authorize the court to make the proper findings and enter an ordinary decree of foreclosure *nunc pro tunc*. But it appears that the decree as entered, and which is the basis of this proceeding in error, contains the following: "The court further finds that the defendants Goodwin W. Phelps, Charles J. Phelps, and Edwin A. Phelps, and each of them, are personally liable to the plaintiff for the payment of said note, and the amount due and owing thereon, and that they, and each of them, are personally liable for any deficiency which may remain after applying the proceeds of the sale of said premises to the payment of the amount herein found due and owing." It seems clear that the evidence of the defendant in support of her application is not sufficient to sustain the finding above quoted. Neither the judge's notes nor the journalizing thereof by the clerk contain anything whatever in relation to a finding of a personal liability on the note, or a liability of the plaintiffs herein for a deficiency. The evidence of the witness Thomas goes no further than the entries above mentioned. He simply testified that he was present in court and heard the judge render the decree, and saw him enter his notes on the calendar, and that he heard him thereafter read such entry. He did not attempt to state what the terms of the judgment which the court actually rendered were, and there is nothing in the record anywhere which would indicate that the court actually made the finding above quoted at the time he rendered his decree. It is beyond question that the district court had jurisdiction to order the decree, which was actually rendered by Judge Marshall on the 7th of December, 1895, entered upon the journal of the court as of that date. *Garrison v. People*, 6 Neb. 274; *Hoagland v. Way*, 35 Neb. 387; *Wachsmuth v. Orient Ins. Co.*, 49 Neb. 590; *Fisk v. Osgood*, 2 Neb. (Unof.) 100; *Creedon v. Patrick*, 3 Neb. (Unof.) 459; *Morrill v. McNeill*, 3 Neb. (Unof.) 220. The

present presiding judge could have no personal knowledge of the terms of the decree which was actually rendered, because it was not rendered by him. He is the successor of Judge Marshall, who rendered the judgment, and who is now deceased. A *nunc pro tunc* judgment must conform to and be no broader in its terms than the one originally rendered. We find no evidence in the record showing, or even tending to show, that the judge of the district court, when he rendered the judgment of December 7, 1895, made any finding whatever as to the liability of the plaintiffs herein for a deficiency. So we conclude that the evidence is insufficient to sustain the finding contained in the present judgment on that point.

For this reason, so much of the judgment complained of as relates to the personal liability of the plaintiffs for a deficiency is reversed, and the judgment of the district court is in all other things affirmed, and the cause is remanded for further proceedings upon the application for a deficiency judgment.

JUDGMENT ACCORDINGLY.

GEORGE L. FARLEY v. JOHN D. MCBRIDE.

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,714.

1. **Candidates for Office: LIBEL.** The manner in which a public officer conducted the duties of his office is a fair subject for comment by the press when he is a candidate for reelection, and a newspaper is justified in calling the attention of the public to illegal charges made by him as a reason why he should not again be chosen.
2. **Libel.** Where a newspaper states, in substance, that the sheriff of the county, who is a candidate for reelection, had obtained from the county a certain sum of money upon a false and "imaginary" account for expenses which he had never incurred, this is a charge of moral turpitude and dishonesty, and, if false, is libelous *per se*.

ERROR to the district court for Cass county: PAUL JESSEN, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

Byron Clark, A. L. Tidd and C. S. Polk, for plaintiff in error.

Samuel M. Chapman and Matthew Gering, contra.

LETTON, C. -

This is an action for libel. John D. McBride, plaintiff below, at the time of the publication of the alleged libel, was the sheriff of Cass county, and was at that time a candidate for reelection. The defendant below, George L. Farley, was the editor and publisher of the Evening News, a newspaper published at Plattsmouth, Nebraska. The publication which is complained of is as follows: "Question of Fees. The question of the sheriff's fees in the Shepard case has been under discussion on our streets for several days, and having gathered some information from the county records, and from parties more or less familiar with the particulars, the News has the following to offer:

"On the 18th day of April Shepard was complained against for daylight burglary with intent to steal. The next day (Sunday) Mr. McBride went to Malvern, Iowa, and arrested him. Besides fees, known or admitted to be legitimate, he charged \$15 'mileage' and \$18.50 'expense.' The legal fee for mileage for that distance is \$2.30. The expense seems to be a fiction, created in the fertile mind of McBride himself. One item of this imaginary 'expense' is \$1.50 hotel bill. Shepard was not taken to a hotel by McBride, nor was he furnished any meals by him until the next day in the jail at the expense of the county. Mr. McBride, it appears, did not go to a hotel while in Malvern, but ate supper with deputy sheriff Bushnell of that town, on invitation, and even if he had done so the county would be under no obligation to pay the bill.

"Another item of expense is 'railroad fare for prisoner' \$2.65. The C., B. & Q. railroad apparently took advantage of Mr. McBride's inexperience by charging him \$1.96 too much, the regular fare being only 69 cents.

"Another item is \$1.50 for 'livery.' This must be pure 'pad' as he hired no livery.

"Still another item is \$1.50 for 'hack hire.' This, if paid at all, was for a hack in Plattsmouth. Shepard was put into a hack upon his arrival here, without request, and driven two blocks to the jail. Such kindness to a prisoner in the matter of hacks is quite unprecedented, and was a McBride invention both in kindness and expense.

"Shepard is charged with a daylight offense. Mr. McBride's transaction was a daylight effort, but here the parallel ends. Shepard is charged with 'evil intent' but got nothing. McBride received a nice little compensation which was paid by the taxpayers of the county. Shepard is now under bond, awaiting trial, and may be sent to the penitentiary, while McBride is running for sheriff on his honesty and efficiency as a public official."

After the article was published, McBride wrote a letter to the defendant demanding a retraction, and attached to the letter an itemized statement and explanation of the fees and expenses charged in the return to the warrant for Shepard's arrest. A retraction was refused, and subsequently this action was brought. The defendant justifies the publication as a just criticism of the acts of a public official, asserts that it was made without malice, and that the charges made as to the collection of illegal fees and expenses are true.

It appears that the matter of the charges made by Mr. McBride as sheriff had been a matter of discussion before the publication of this article, and that the defendant had been advised by different attorneys that the charges made in the Shepard case for money paid to the deputy sheriff in Iowa and for expenses and mileage incurred outside of the state of Nebraska were illegal. It does not appear that any attempt was ever made by the defend-

ant to ascertain whether or not the sheriff had actually paid out the money for expenses which he charged in his bill.

The evidence shows that in April, 1903, Shepard was accused of an attempt to perpetrate a daylight burglary at Weeping Water, Nebraska; that upon information being given to the sheriff of the fact that such an attempt had been made, and that Shepard was suspected of being the criminal, he immediately took steps to ascertain his whereabouts, went to Auburn and Lincoln in the search for Shepard, and sent out directions to local peace officers in that vicinity to arrest and hold Shepard if within their reach; that under the direction and advice of the sheriff to a local deputy sheriff Shepard was found near Malvern, in the state of Iowa, and that on receipt of this information McBride went to Iowa, and with this deputy made the arrest, the prisoner consenting to return with him to Nebraska without a requisition upon the governor of that state. In looking for Shepard, and in procuring his arrest and return to Nebraska, the sheriff incurred a number of expenses, such as \$4 paid for watching Shepard's house at Weeping Water, \$10 paid deputy sheriff of Mills county, Iowa, for his aid, \$1.50 for hack hire, \$1.50 for hotel expense, 20 cents for telephoning, and \$2.65 for railroad fare. From an examination of the bill of expenses submitted by the sheriff it is clear that for part of the items of expense there was no legal liability upon the part of the county to reimburse him, while at the same time it may be said that the sheriff had actually paid out the money, and that it was not unreasonable for him to think that he should be reimbursed by the county for his expenditures in that behalf. The article charges that "the expense seems to be a fiction, created in the fertile mind of McBride himself. One item of this imaginary 'expense' is \$1.50 hotel bill." This portion of the article distinctly charges that the sheriff had charged \$18.50 for expenses, when in fact he had never incurred any, and that the expense was "a fiction" and "imaginary." The

evidence shows this statement to be false and untrue and that he had in fact paid out the money which he charged.

Further than this the article draws a parallel between the man Shepard, who was charged with a felony, and McBride. It is said: "Shepard is charged with a daylight offense, Mr. McBride's transaction was a daylight effort, but here the parallel ends. Shepard is charged with 'evil intent' but got nothing. McBride received a nice little compensation which was paid by the taxpayers of the county. Shepard is now under bond, awaiting trial, and may be sent to the penitentiary, while McBride is running for sheriff on his honesty and efficiency as a public official." To the ordinary mind this language is equivalent to saying that Shepard and McBride are equally guilty of crime; that Shepard is awaiting trial and may be sent to the penitentiary, while McBride is at large.

The question of whether or not the sheriff was entitled to be reimbursed by the county for the money which he had actually paid out for expenses in the attempt to capture Shepard was a question of law. There is no doubt that a part of the charges made by the sheriff against the county were unauthorized by law and were a proper subject for criticism and discussion by the press, more especially when he became a candidate for reelection. So far as the defendant might call the attention of the public to charges made by the sheriff which were not justified by law, he would be protected by the qualified privilege allowed him as the publisher of a newspaper to criticise a public officer; and if his strictures and criticisms were confined within proper limits, and were made without malice and for justifiable ends, no action would lie against him for such publication. The defendant would have been within his rights in questioning the propriety of the charge and allowance to the sheriff of this money for expenses upon the ground that the charge was not one for which the county was legally liable, but he did more than this. He recklessly

and untruthfully asserted that the sheriff had obtained from the county the sum of \$18.50 upon a false account for expenses which he had never incurred. This is a distinct charge of moral turpitude, dishonesty and crime which the evidence entirely fails to justify. Further than this the parallel sought to be drawn between the sheriff and Shepard is in nowise justified by the circumstances. The meaning of the language used in this connection is clear and needs no gloss. It places the sheriff and the alleged criminal in the same class, and is entirely indefensible and malicious.

It is proper and right that the acts of public officials should be subject to criticism. It is one of the highest privileges of an active and impartial press to closely watch the acts of public officers, to praise where merit is due, and fearlessly and without favor to point out wherein such officers have failed to do their duty or have attempted to use their positions for private advantage, but this privilege granted to the press for the public welfare is not to be recklessly abused. Every man is entitled to be secure in his property, in his person and in his reputation. Our fundamental law says that "every person, for any injury done him in his lands, goods, person, or reputation, shall have remedy by due course of law." The liberty of the press and the rights of the individual must and do exist side by side. No attack is so hard to resist, so difficult to withstand, nor so far-reaching in its consequences, as that which it is within the power of an unscrupulous writer to make upon one's reputation; and, while the press must not be muzzled, it is the duty of the courts to preserve in so far as may be the rights of the individual and his immunity from unwarranted attack.

Complaint is made by the defendant of certain instructions given by the trial court and of other rulings made during the progress of the trial. An examination of the record convinces us, however, that the rights of the defendant were carefully and scrupulously protected by the district court. Under the facts in this case the verdict of

the jury was clearly right, and a finding for the defendant would have been unwarranted by the evidence. The damages assessed were but little more than nominal, and we are of the opinion that the defendant is not the party who has any cause to complain of the result of the trial. We perceive no error which has resulted to his prejudice, and therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

ROBINSON & COMPANY V. THOMAS H. RALPH ET AL.

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,815.

1. **Contract: ACCEPTANCE.** Where a written order for threshing machinery contains a condition that it shall not be binding until accepted by the officers of the selling corporation, the signer of the order is not bound by stipulations or limitations therein until its acceptance by such officers.
2. **Pledge.** Where a lot of threshing machinery was consigned to the manufacturer at a point where it was expected to sell the same, and at the request of the manufacturer's general agent, who was in control of the property, money was advanced by an intending purchaser to pay freight charges, and, no sale being made, the agent pledged the machinery to the persons advancing the money until the same was repaid, the pledgee has a lien upon the property to that extent, and the owner is not entitled to its possession until the freight charges are paid.

ERROB to the district court for Greeley county: JAMES N. PAUL, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

J. R. Swain and T. P. Lanigan, for plaintiff in error.

T. J. Doyle, contra.

LETTON, C.

The plaintiff in error, Robinson & Company, a corporation, plaintiff below, brought this action in replevin to recover from the defendants a lot of threshing machinery. The defendants claimed the right of possession of the property by reason of a lien which they claimed they had upon the same for the sum of \$135.10 paid by them for freight upon the same. The cause was tried to the court without a jury, and findings and judgment rendered that the defendants had a special ownership for the amount of the freight charges paid by them, with interest. The controversy arose from these facts: In July, 1903, the defendants, who are farmers residing in Greeley county, gave a written order to the plaintiff, through its local agents at Greeley, Harris & McGinn, for the purchase of the machinery. The contract was sent to the home office of the plaintiff at Richmond, Indiana, and the machinery was shipped to the plaintiff at Greeley. The written order stated the security which the defendants were to furnish, as well as the terms of sale. Upon the arrival of the machinery at Greeley the plaintiff refused to deliver the same to the defendants unless they would execute a chattel mortgage upon \$600 worth of personal property in addition to that described in the order. This the defendants refused to do, and, after certain negotiations with the local agents of the plaintiff at Greeley, they started to Lincoln for the purpose of buying a machine of another make. The bill of lading for the machinery was sent to the Greeley State Bank at Greeley, Nebraska, with instructions to deliver it to the defendants upon their executing the notes and mortgage described in the written agreement, with the further security demanded. The dispute over the giving of the additional security and the delivery of the property was communicated by the local agents to one H. A. Smith at Omaha, who appeared to be the general agent of the plaintiff in this state. He apparently conveyed this information to the home office of the plaintiff, and on Au-

gust 7th was instructed by wire to have settlement made according to the original contract; and, presumably after plaintiffs had been informed that the parties were going to Lincoln to purchase another machine, another message was sent to Smith as follows: "Go yourself. Follow parties up. Get settlement or notify competitors, also us. Have wired bank deliver you papers." Smith immediately went to Lincoln, and met the local agent and the defendants at the Lincoln Hotel, where, after some negotiations, Smith reduced the price \$100, and a new order was executed. It was also agreed by Smith orally that he would go to Greeley, unload the machinery, put it in shape to run and start it, and that when it proved satisfactory to the defendants they were to sign the notes. At that time the machinery had not been unloaded. The parties then returned to Greeley, Smith accompanying them. The next morning the machinery was unloaded—Smith and another agent of the plaintiff, named Gill, overseeing the unloading—and it was taken to the farm of one Fitzpatrick, who had grain to thresh. The weather was rainy; so nothing was done at that time, and Smith went home, but he returned the next week. The local agent, Harris, started the machine and tried to run it one day, and Smith and Gill also worked with it for three days. The machine did not do satisfactory work, and Smith and Gill finally abandoned the attempt to operate it, and it was taken away from the work under Smith's direction. At the time the machine was unloaded, the defendants advanced the money to pay the freight at Smith's request. When the attempt to work the machine was given up, defendant Ralph informed Smith that he wanted his freight money. Smith then told him that he would get the money, but that he did not have that much money with him, and that he could hold the machine until the freight money was paid. Apparently no further attempt was made to operate the machine, and the same was held by the defendants subject to the order of the plaintiff upon payment of the freight. There is no dispute about these facts. But the

plaintiff's contention is that Smith was only a special agent with limited powers which were specified in the printed order form, and that he had no authority from them to deliver the machine to the defendants without the execution of the notes and mortgage provided in the order, and had no authority to agree that the machine should be held by the defendants as security for the repayment of the freight charges.

The plaintiff relies upon the rule laid down in *Bradley & Co. v. Basta*, 71 Neb. 169, which holds, in effect, that oral statements and warranties made antecedent to and contemporaneous with the signing of a written contract cannot be considered for the purpose of setting aside or superseding the written instrument. This rule is elementary, and if the facts warranted its application in this case we should apply the same. In the instant case, however, the written order was never accepted by the plaintiff's officers at its office in Richmond as its terms required before it would be binding upon the company, and therefore the written contract was never completed. It was merely an offer to purchase, and at the time of the transaction by Smith had never been accepted by the plaintiff, or even seen by any of its officers qualified to accept and agree to the same under the terms of the printed matter.

The case stands thus, therefore: That an agent of the plaintiff, apparently clothed with complete control and authority over the property, requests the defendants to pay the freight upon machinery billed to the plaintiff, and by means of the bill of lading furnished him by the plaintiff obtains possession of the property. While in complete control and possession of the same, he makes an agreement that the defendants may have a lien upon it until the freight charges advanced by them are paid. The plaintiff is in no worse condition, so far as the freight charges are concerned, than it was before Smith made this verbal pledge and agreement with the defendants. The carrier had a lien upon the property for this amount,

and, under the circumstances, we are of the opinion that the defendants were, in effect, subrogated to that lien. The money was paid to the plaintiff's use at the request of its agent, and we see no good reason why the defendants should suffer by this act.

But, even if we take the view that the telegram recited gave Smith authority to accept the order, and waived the conditions therein that the contract was not binding upon the company until accepted by its officers at the home office, the written order contained a warranty that with proper management the thresher would do as much and as good work as any other of similar size for the same purpose, and provided for the rescission of the contract if it failed to comply with the terms of the warranty. When the local agent, Harris, the expert, Gill, and the general agent, Smith, all failed to make the machine work, it seems clear that it failed to meet the conditions of the written warranty, and that, even if the contract had been fully executed, the defendants would have had the right to rescind, under all the circumstances, and to recover back their outlay. We think it immaterial which horn of the dilemma the plaintiff takes and that in either event the defendants are entitled to retain the possession of the property until the money advanced by them is repaid.

We think the district court committed no error, and that its judgment should be affirmed.

AMES and OLDDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

FRED SCHROEDER, SR., ET AL. V. JOHN BLUM, JR.

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,837.

1. **Malicious Prosecution: EVIDENCE.** In an action for malicious prosecution, where two complaints were filed in the criminal action, and where one of the defenses is that the defendants made a full and complete statement of all the facts and circumstances bearing upon the guilt of the plaintiff to the proper prosecuting officers, and that the prosecution was carried on in good faith on the advice of such officers, it is error to exclude testimony of one of the defendants that such disclosure was made before the filing of the second and amended complaint, which was the complaint upon which the plaintiff was bound over to the district court, since this is a good defense *pro tanto*.
2. **Evidence: THREATS.** Generally, evidence of threats against the prosecutor not communicated to him until after the prosecution has been had are not admissible upon the question of probable cause, but where the prosecuting witness himself testifies to an overt criminal act within his own knowledge, which is denied, corroborative evidence which tends to establish the fact that the act was committed is relevant and material, and it is error to exclude the same.
3. **Instructions.** In such a case an instruction that facts cannot be considered which existed prior to the institution of the criminal proceedings, which were not communicated to the party instituting the prosecution, is erroneous.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: **GUY R. C. READ, JUDGE.** *Reversed.*

J. J. O'Connor and Cooper & Dunn, for plaintiffs in error.

Jefferis, Howell & Shotwell, contra.

LETTON, C.

This is an action for malicious prosecution brought by John Blum, Jr., as plaintiff, against Fred Schroeder, Sr., and Fred Schroeder, Jr. as defendants. From a verdict and judgment in favor of the plaintiff, the defendants Schroeder prosecute error. For convenience the parties

Schroeder v. Blum.

will be named plaintiff and defendant as in the lower court. The plaintiff, John Blum, Jr., and the defendant Fred Schroeder, Jr., are cousins, and are both young men. At the time of the alleged transaction out of which the prosecution arose, young Schroeder was 20 years of age, and young Blum a few months older. They both lived near the village of Millard, in Douglas county, and were apparently rival suitors of one Mary Kelsey, who afterwards married young Schroeder. Young Schroeder testifies that on the evening of August 9, 1900, as he was going on horseback from his home a few miles from Millard to that place, he was shot at from a clump of willows by the roadside; that he saw Blum's pony standing there, and saw a man with a white handkerchief around his neck in the bushes. Other witnesses testify that, shortly after Schroeder rode into the village that night, Blum followed also on horseback. Blum testifies that he wore a white handkerchief around his neck that night. There is other testimony corroborative of Schroeder's. Blum denies that he was nearer the place where the alleged shots were fired that night than the village of Millard, and other evidence tends to corroborate this statement. On the 11th of August a complaint was filed before Henry Kelsey, a justice of the peace in Millard precinct, reciting that Fred Schroeder makes complaint that he has just cause to fear and does fear that John Blum, Jr., will unlawfully, maliciously and wilfully shoot him with a gun and kill him; that on divers occasions the said John Blum, Jr., has threatened to take his life; that on the 9th day of August, 1903, the said John Blum, Jr., met him on the public highway in Douglas county, Nebraska, and discharged a gun at him, and that the said John Blum, Jr., unlawfully carries a concealed revolver the greater portion of his time. This complaint was signed and sworn to by both of the Schroeders. A warrant was issued upon this complaint, and Blum arrested. He was brought before the justice and detained for about half an hour, when the personal recognizance of himself and his father was taken,

and the case continued. At the time to which the case was continued he appeared and filed a motion for a change of venue, which was granted, and the cause transferred to one William R. Learn, another justice of the peace in Douglas county. Before the date set for hearing before Justice Learn, the Schroeders, father and son, went to the county attorney of Douglas county and laid the facts before one of his deputies, whereupon an amended and substituted complaint was prepared by the deputy county attorney, and sworn to by the elder Schroeder, which charged that he had just cause to fear and does fear that John Blum, Jr., will unlawfully, maliciously and wilfully commit an offense against the person of Fred Schroeder, Jr., the minor child of this affiant. After the filing of this amended complaint, a hearing was had before Justice Learn, who found there was probable cause, and bound the defendant over to appear before the district court. On November 9, 1901, without the knowledge or consent of either of the Schroeders, the case was *nolled* by one of the deputy county attorneys of Douglas county, and Blum discharged. Thereafter this action was begun.

A number of errors are assigned, but, in the view we take of the case, it will only be necessary to notice one or two. Instruction No. 2 given by the court upon its own motion is complained of. This instruction directed the jury that the burden of proof was upon the plaintiff to establish each of the material allegations of his petition, except so far as have been admitted by the answer of the defendants. We have heretofore criticised adversely the giving of such an instruction as this, since, standing alone, it affords no guide to the jury as to what the material issues are, but in other instructions the main issues in the case were directly and specifically pointed out to the jury.

The jury were instructed that the allegations of the first complaint filed charged the plaintiff with three distinct offenses. The instruction specified the penalty for each offense, and said that the jury might consider the same as though there were three separate complaints filed at the

same time, each one charging one of the several offenses therein charged; keeping in mind on the question of damages, if they found for the plaintiff, that there was but one arrest and but one cause actually pending against the plaintiff at any given time. We are inclined to think that the court erred in this; that the purpose of the complaint was to require Blum to enter into a recognizance to keep the peace, and that the statements that Blum had threatened to take his life, that he met him and discharged a gun at him, and that he carries a concealed revolver a greater portion of the time, were merely matters of evidence improperly inserted in the complaint. No attorney was present when this complaint was filed, and as soon as the facts were laid before the public prosecutor, an amended complaint was filed, omitting these superfluous and redundant allegations.

One of the defenses set up in the answer was that at the time of filing the complaint a full and complete statement of the facts was made to the prosecuting officers of Douglas county, and that the complaint was filed upon the advice of such officers. The defense attempted to prove by young Schroeder that he made a full statement to the deputy county attorney, Mr. Helsley, before the filing of the amended complaint, of all the facts and circumstances with relation to the supposed guilt of Blum, but upon objection this evidence was rejected. An offer to prove was then made, but was rejected by the trial court, to which exception was taken. At a later stage of the trial, however, Mr. Helsley was permitted to testify to the statements that were made to him by the Schroeders, and to the effect that he told them the first complaint was informal, and that a second complaint must be filed, and further, that he advised the filing of the amended and substituted complaint. This might perhaps cure the error committed by the exclusion of the defendants' testimony with reference to the disclosure made to the county attorney before the filing of the amended complaint; and yet, it seems to us, judging from the amount of the verdict, that the jury,

perhaps, were unduly influenced by the adverse rulings of the court upon the admission of the young man's testimony.

The plaintiff having testified in his own behalf, and having denied specifically that he had ever threatened young Schroeder or that he had ever shot at him, was asked upon cross-examination whether or not upon the day that he was arrested he admitted to Miss Kelsey that he had threatened to shoot her and to shoot Fred Schroeder and another party. This testimony was objected to by the plaintiff and excluded. He was also asked whether he had not made threats to one Henry Glissman that he would get even with Fred Schroeder, that he would shoot him, or words to that effect. This testimony also was excluded upon the plaintiff's objection. Glissman was called as a witness and testified that in July, 1900, he had a conversation with young Blum, wherein Blum said, speaking of young Schroeder, "I will get even with him yet, and I will have revenge"; that with that he threw back his coat, slapped his hip pocket, and that the witness saw the butt end of a revolver in his pocket. He further testifies that similar statements were made in another conversation afterwards. On cross-examination Glissman told that he did not communicate these facts to either of the Schroeders until July, 1902, long after the prosecution. At the close of the trial, upon the motion of the plaintiff, all the evidence of the witness Glissman was excluded by the court, and the jury instructed by the 8th instruction not to consider it, for the reason that the matters in relation to which this witness testified were not communicated to the defendants, or either of them, prior to the time of filing the original complaint against the plaintiff, or prior to the time of the filing of the amended and substituted complaint. In these rulings we think the learned trial court erred. The testimony of Glissman that Blum had made threats to shoot young Schroeder before the time that Schroeder testifies to the shooting, or Blum's admission that he had made such threats before this time, was certainly proper testimony for the jury to consider. The

prosecution followed immediately upon young Schroeder being shot at, according to Schroeder's testimony. If this event actually occurred, and the facts were as Schroeder relates, the shooting, in connection with the other circumstances, would constitute probable cause for Blum's arrest upon a peace warrant, and any evidence which tended to corroborate Schroeder's story was relevant and material. The jury might disbelieve Schroeder's testimony, standing alone, but if it was corroborated by testimony that previous to this time Blum had made threats to shoot him, or to get even with him, it might establish the truth of Schroeder's story in their minds. In the absence of any overt act testified to by the defendant as ground for the charge, the truth of which was in dispute, this testimony might, perhaps, have been properly excluded under the rule expressed in *Maynard v. Sigman*, 65 Neb. 590, and this is probably the ground upon which the trial judge refused to allow the testimony to go to the jury; but we think the defendants were entitled to all the evidence offered which tended to prove that young Blum actually attempted to shoot Schroeder before the filing of the complaint, and for this reason its exclusion was prejudicially erroneous.

The same considerations apply as to instruction No. 7, requested by the plaintiff and given by the court. This instruction states, in substance, that whether or not probable cause exists must be determined upon the facts that were known to the party filing the complaint before the filing of the same, and that facts cannot be considered which existed prior to the institution of the criminal proceedings which have not been shown by the evidence to have been communicated to the party instituting the prosecution. Under the circumstances of this case we think this instruction should not have been given.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for a new trial.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for a new trial.

REVERSED.

BENJAMIN F. ALDRITT, APPELLANT, V. CHARLES
FLEISCHAUER, APPELLEE.

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,846.

1. **Surface Water: DRAINAGE.** An owner of land must so use his own property as not unnecessarily and negligently to injure his neighbor. Every proprietor may lawfully improve his property by doing what is reasonably necessary for this purpose, and, unless guilty of some act of negligence in the manner of its execution, will not be answerable to an adjoining proprietor, although he may thereby cause surface water to flow on the premises of the latter to his damage.
2. ———: ———. An owner of land has the right in the interest of good husbandry to drain ponds or basins thereon of a temporary character, and which have no natural outlet or course of flow, by discharging the waters thereof by means of an artificial channel into a natural surface-water drain on his own property, and through such drain over the land of another proprietor in the general course of drainage in that locality, even though the flow in such natural drain is thereby increased over the lower estate, and provided that this is done in a reasonable and careful manner and without negligence. *Davis v. Londgreen*, 8 Neb. 43, distinguished.

APPEAL from the district court for Fillmore county:
LESLIE G. HURD, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

J. D. Pope, for appellant.

C. H. Sloan and *F. W. Sloan*, contra.

LETTON, C.

The plaintiff brought this action to enjoin the defendant from discharging surface waters which accumulated in a

pond upon the defendant's land through a ditch onto and over the lands of the plaintiff. The defendant is the owner of the west half of the northwest quarter of a certain section of land in Fillmore county, and the plaintiff owns 160 acres south of it. Upon a portion of the defendant's land there is a depression which extends to the eastward over the land of an adjoining proprietor, named Howarth. The larger portion of this depression or basin is upon the land of Howarth, and in times of wet weather or of melting snows the basin is filled with water, which covers 35 or 40 acres to a depth of three feet or more at the deepest point, about 10 or 15 acres being on defendant's land. In dry seasons the basin is dry. There is no natural outlet, and the only way of escape for the water is by evaporation or percolation. On the land of the defendant a small natural waterway or channel takes its rise, extending in a southerly direction to the land of the plaintiff, and finding its outlet into a larger depression or waterway extending in a southeasterly direction over the plaintiff's land, and finally draining into a natural watercourse, called Turkey creek, some miles distant. This depression upon the plaintiff's land has been in cultivation for over 20 years. The defendant dug a ditch entirely upon his own land through a slight rim or rise of land between the pond and the natural waterway or "draw," as locally styled, which leads to the plaintiff's land, thereby draining the water from the pond into the natural waterway upon his own land, and thus into and across that portion of the plaintiff's cultivated land which occupies the waterway or depression before mentioned. The facts with reference to the character of the basin or pond upon the defendant's land and the manner of discharge upon the land of the plaintiff are very similar to those in the case of *Todd v. York County*, 72 Neb. 207, 66 L. R. A. 561. The only apparent distinction between the two cases as to the facts is that in the *Todd* case the ditch followed the direction of the natural drainage, and that, if the pond or basin had been filled up, the

water of the same would have followed the same course as it was made to follow by the digging of the ditch, while in the instant case the evidence fails to show with any certainty where the water would flow in such case, though the greater weight of the evidence tends to show that the lowest point on the rim was on the south side of the pond, on Howarth's land, and beyond plaintiff's east line, so that the water in such case would not reach plaintiff's land.

Under the rule in the *Todd* case, which seems to be the rule of both the civil and the common law (3 Farnham, Waters, secs. 889a-889c; also note by H. P. Farnham to *Todd v. York County*, 66 L. R. A. 561), an owner of land has the right to drain ponds or basins thereon of a temporary character by discharging the waters thereof by means of artificial channels into a natural surface water drain on his own property, and through such drain over the land of another proprietor, even though the flow in such natural drain is thereby increased over the lower estate, provided he acts in a reasonable and careful manner and without negligence, but he cannot divert the flow of the water in a different direction from the natural course of drainage. An interesting discussion as to the law in such case is to be found in the sections of Farnham on Waters above cited.

The instant case presents the question whether the owner of lands, upon which a large quantity of surface water often stands in a pond or basin, may by artificial means cut through the natural barrier which prevents it from reaching the lands of an adjoining proprietor, and drain it into a natural waterway on his own land, and thereby cast a new burden upon the adjoining estate, which the water previously could not reach. It is argued for the plaintiff that this case is identical with the facts in the case of *Davis v. Londgreen*, 8 Neb. 43, and that the rule laid down in that case applies that the owner of a natural pond or reservoir, wherein the surface water from the surrounding land accumulates, and from which it has no means of escape except by evaporation or percolation, can-

not lawfully, by means of a ditch, discharge such water upon the land of his neighbor to his injury. In that case, however, so far as appears from the report, the defendant discharged the waters of a pond by means of a ditch, not, as in this case, into a natural drainage way upon his own land, thence flowing into a larger channel of like nature on the land of the plaintiff, but directly into and over the land of Davis, so that it spread over several acres of the cultivated land and rendered it unfit for use, and so that it commenced to cut a watercourse across the same. There is a clear and marked distinction between the facts in this case and in that, and a general principle which may apply to that case cannot control this. On the other hand, the defendant contends that the rule in the *Todd* case and in the case of *Rath v. Zembleman*, 49 Neb. 351, applies.

In the state of Nebraska, whose surface consists of more or less rolling plains, the action of the elements has caused by erosion a system of natural drainage channels, locally termed "draws" or "ravines," usually beginning with a slight depression in the surface, and gradually deepening as they reach well-defined streams and watercourses, which are, as compared with those of more humid states, comparatively few in number. These "draws" form natural drainage channels for surface water, and are largely instrumental in promoting the interests of agriculture and the healthfulness and salubrity of the climate, by furnishing an unsurpassed natural drainage system, and thus quickly removing from the soil any excess of moisture therein caused by excessive rains or melting snows. These channels are usually dry, but are often deep enough with running water after storms to swim a horse. They afford almost the only means of surface drainage available to the husbandman, and his right to the use of the same, reasonably exercised, should not lightly be impaired. We have repeatedly said that the rule of this state with reference to surface waters is the rule of the common law, and that an owner may defend his premises against it by dike or embankment, and if damages result to adjoining proprie-

Aldritt v. Fleischauer.

tors by reason of such defense, he is not liable therefor. But this rule is a general one, and subject to another common law rule, that a proprietor must so use his own property as not to unnecessarily and negligently injure his neighbor. Therefore, every proprietor may lawfully improve his property by doing what is reasonably necessary for that purpose, and, unless guilty of some act of negligence in the manner of its execution, will not be answerable to an adjoining proprietor, although he may thereby cause the surface water to flow on the premises of the latter to his damage; but if, in the execution of such enterprise, he is guilty of negligence, which is the natural and proximate cause of injury to his neighbor, he is accountable therefor.

As the water lay on Fleischauer's land it rendered useless 10 to 15 acres of it, and the odors and exhalations from the stagnant water were noxious and annoying. A few rods away upon his own land was a natural drainage channel leading in the general direction of the drainage of the immediate locality. He drained the pond by a small drain into this waterway in such manner that no excessive quantity was precipitated at one time upon his neighbor's land. It is true it rendered a portion of Aldritt's land untillable; but this was because the land lay in the channel of a natural waterway, which from time immemorial had carried the drainage of the surrounding land as far as its branches reached. A proprietor cannot shut his eyes to the natural configuration of his land. His right of ownership is not entirely separate and disconnected from the rights of adjoining proprietors, and with it the law confers rights and imposes duties from which he cannot free himself.

To the extent that surface water having an accustomed flow in a drainage channel or waterway having well-defined banks may not be stopped by the erection of an embankment across the channel, so as to divert the waters to the injury of adjoining proprietors, a modification of the broad rule laid down in the earlier cases in this state

has been adopted by this court. *Town v. Missouri P. R. Co.*, 50 Neb. 768; *Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co. v. Shaw*, 63 Neb. 380; *Missouri P. R. Co. v. Hemingway*, 63 Neb. 610. These cases recognize the existence of the natural drainage channels which are common to the topography of this state, and apply the rule that the natural flow of surface water in the same cannot be interrupted by embankments in such manner as to divert the waters upon the lands of adjoining proprietors to their injury. Natural drainage channels exist to a greater or less extent in almost every locality. "That these drainage channels cannot be obstructed is supported by the great weight of authority. It is the rule in England, Canada, Ireland, Alabama, California, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Vermont and West Virginia." (Citing cases under each jurisdiction.) 3 Farnham, Waters, p. 2,600, sec. 889d. If these channels cannot be legally obstructed, their use as waterways is recognized, and a reasonable use of their facilities is not wrongful.

The supreme court of Minnesota in *Shoehan v. Flynn*, 59 Minn. 436, 26 L. R. A. 632, had before it a case in which the facts were almost identical with those in this case. In that case the court examines and distinguishes the prior cases in that state and holds that, under the rule that an owner must so use his own as not unnecessarily or unreasonably to injure his neighbor, it is the duty of an owner draining his own land to deposit the surface water in some natural drain, if one is reasonably accessible, and he is entitled to deposit the same in such natural drain though it is thereby conveyed upon the land of his neighbor, if it does not thereby unreasonably injure him. In that case, as in this, it fairly appeared that the manner of drainage pursued was the only way in which the proprietor could reasonably drain the depression, and that the ravine or waterway in which the ditch emptied was the only nat-

ural drain reasonably accessible. It also further appeared that the consequent injury to others was not so great as compared to the benefit to be derived from the improvement as to make it unreasonable upon that account. The statement in the *Sheehan* case, as in *Todd v. York County, supra*, that the "common enemy" doctrine applies, except as modified by the rule above stated, is criticised by Mr. Farnham in the notes to those cases in the *Lawyers Reports Annotated*, and also in his recent work upon *Water and Water Rights*, vol. 3, p. 2,598, in which valuable work there is a historical examination and resume of the English and American cases. However, it is not of so much importance to litigants to label a doctrine properly, as to apply its provisions, and whether we say that the rule in the *Todd* case and in the *Sheehan* case is a modification of the common law rule, or that it is an adoption of the civil law rule, is immaterial, so long as the court protects the legal rights of individuals.

We think therefore that, if Aldritt cultivated the natural waterway upon his land, he did it knowing the contingencies incident to its use in this manner. The natural drainage channel existing upon his own land, and running thence through Aldritt's land, was apparently the only outlet reasonably accessible to Fleischauer for the drainage of the surface water. It presented, as is said in *Town v. Missouri P. R. Co., supra*, "many of the distinctive attributes of a watercourse," and we think he was justified in using the same in a reasonable manner, even though it resulted in injury to his neighbor Aldritt.

We have so far considered the case without reference to the law enacted in 1903, which provides: "Owners of land may drain the same in the general course of natural drainage by constructing an open drain or ditch discharging the same into any natural watercourse or into any natural depression or draw whereby it will be carried into some natural watercourse, and when such drain is wholly on the owner's land he shall not be liable in damage therefor to any person or corporation." Comp. St. 1903, ch. 89, art.

Lamb v. Wilson.

III, sec. 1 (Ann. St. 5543). This enactment has been assailed as being unconstitutional for several reasons. As we have seen, this right exists independent of this statute, provided that it be exercised in a reasonable and proper manner and with due regard to the rights of lower proprietors. It is unnecessary therefore to consider the vulnerability of the statute to the attack made by the appellant upon its validity.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

WALTER J. LAMB, APPELLANT, V. HENRY H. WILSON ET AL.,
APPELLEES.

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,891.

APPEAL from the district court for Lancaster county:
EDWARD P. HOLMES, JUDGE. *Reversed. Judgment for plaintiff.*

Walter J. Lamb and Joseph Wurzburg, for appellant.

Wilson & Brown and Ricketts & Ricketts, contra.

LETTON, C.

This is an appeal from a decree rendered in an action for an accounting and settlement of partnership affairs. This controversy has already been before us three times, and is reported in 3 Neb. (Unof.) 496, 505, and 70 Neb. 729. We refer to these opinions for a full statement of the facts. At the last trial in the district court, that court proceeded to try the issues as it understood the mandate

of the supreme court, found that nothing was due from either of said parties to the other, and adjudged that the action be dismissed and that each party pay half of the costs. Both parties appeal from this decree.

The plaintiff contends that the district court disregarded the mandate and refused to investigate certain matters which were properly at issue, and which should have been examined into; and further, that the findings of the district court with reference to a number of the charges allowed in favor of the defendants are not sustained by competent evidence. The defendants, on the other hand, insist that the judgment of this court and its mandate directed the district court to treat the evidence and findings of the court already in the record as before the court in the further hearing of the case, and that all findings of fact made by the district court, not disturbed by this court upon appeal, stand affirmed and should not be reexamined. The mandate is as follows: "It is ordered that the judgment of reversal heretofore entered in this case be so modified as to direct the district court to hear such additional evidence as may be requisite for a complete statement of the accounts between the parties, and restate such accounts and render judgment accordingly in accordance with the law as stated in the syllabus of the opinion upon the last hearing, without regard to the findings of fact, or distribution of items, and partial statement of accounts contained in said opinion." It will be observed that the district court is directed "to hear such additional evidence as may be requisite for a complete statement of the accounts between the parties." This language plainly imports that the district court is required to take only such *additional* evidence as may be necessary. This evidently requires the consideration by the district court of all the evidence previously taken in the case, and renders unnecessary the repetition of testimony already taken.

From an examination of the record it appears that the principal dispute between the parties is with regard to the amounts severally due in what is termed the *Houston-Gran*

case, the case of *Maynard v. Hecht*, and the case of the *Chattanooga Foundry & Pipe Co. v. Orleans*. In both of the former opinions the matters in difference with reference to these claims were examined and discussed, and in the last opinion, written by Mr. Commissioner AMES, certain principles were laid down in the syllabus governing the proper disposition of the amounts received for the service of the members of the partnership after the firm had ceased to undertake the conduct of new business, and merely existed for the purpose of winding up the business. As to the fee in the *Houston-Gran* case, under the rule thus established, Ricketts & Wilson were entitled to receive and retain the reasonable value of their services and disbursements in all subsequent and supplementary proceedings made necessary by the effort to collect the judgment, and were only required to account to the firm for the balance of the amount realized by them after their fees were paid. The district court took evidence upon the value of these services and found that they were entitled to receive as compensation for the same the sum of \$550.05, and they were required to account to Lamb, Ricketts & Wilson for the sum of \$1,597, being the money remaining in their hands after payment of their attorneys' fees for services after judgment. We think from the evidence that, when the district court fixed the sum of \$550.05 as the value of the defendants' services in the collection of the *Houston-Gran* judgment, it must have had in view the other side of the account, and valued the services to the end that the accounts should balance. The value of these services was variously estimated by different witnesses, one witness placing their value from \$1,000 to \$1,200; another from \$800 to \$1,000; another \$875, and still another at the sum of \$375. These witnesses had no interest in the controversy. From a consideration of all the evidence, we are of the opinion that these services were reasonably worth \$875, and that the defendants should account to the partnership for \$1,272.06 on account of the *Houston-Gran* collection. In the matter of fees for serv-

ices rendered the Chattanooga Foundry & Pipe Company, it appears that, after a dispute had arisen between the parties to this suit as to the proper division of these fees, and after the charge of \$300 had been made by Lamb for the sale of the judgment in the case against the city of Orleans, the facts with reference to the sale were reported to Ricketts & Wilson by a letter of July 30, 1895, and that on September 24 thereafter a settlement in full was made, as recited in the opinion of Commissioner DAY upon the first hearing of this case before this court. Upon a careful review of the evidence upon this matter, we believe this settlement was fairly made, and see no reason for disturbing the same. In the *Maynard-Hecht* case the firm had been paid for services in the lower courts, and services, for which Ricketts & Wilson seek to charge \$400, were rendered by them in error proceedings in the supreme court of the United States. By agreement, however, only \$60 was paid for these services rendered after judgment; and we think that, since the services were rendered by Ricketts & Wilson after judgment, they were entitled to the whole of the fee. We cannot consent to charge Lamb with a greater fee than was actually paid by the client.

As thus stated, the fund belonging to Lamb, Ricketts & Wilson amounts to \$2,622.26, of which sum \$60 is due Ricketts & Wilson for services in the *Hecht* case, leaving \$2,562.26 for division, or \$854.08 due each partner. Of this amount Lamb drew out and received \$297.40, or \$556.68 less than his share. Since Ricketts & Wilson retain the fund, he is entitled to recover this amount from them, and judgment should be rendered accordingly. We make no allowance for interest advisedly, since we think neither party is entirely blameless in the matter.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed, and judgment rendered in this court for the plaintiff for the sum of \$556.68 and costs.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed; and it is considered, ordered and adjudged that the plaintiff have and recover from the defendant the sum of \$556.68, and costs of suit.

JUDGMENT ACCORDINGLY.

CHICAGO & NORTHWESTERN RAILWAY COMPANY V. STATE,
EX REL. JOHN CARR ET AL.

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,781.

1. **Railroads: DISCRETIONARY POWERS.** Railway companies, in the absence of statutory provisions limiting and restricting their powers, are vested with a very broad discretion in the matter of locating, constructing and operating their railways, and in locating, maintaining and discontinuing their freight and passenger stations, and with the exercise of such discretion the courts will not interfere except in cases of its abuse.
2. ———: **DISCONTINUING SERVICE.** It is not an abuse of discretion for a railway company to discontinue, under the circumstances of this case, the employment of a station agent at a country place nearly equally distant, and not more than five to seven miles from three thriving villages where regular railway service is maintained, and where are carried on the mercantile, mechanical and professional businesses usually found in such towns.

ERROR to the district court for Holt county: JAMES J. HARRINGTON, JUDGE. *Reversed and dismissed.*

Benjamin T. White, James B. Shecan and C. C. Wright,
for plaintiff in error.

M. T. Harrington, contra.

AMES, C.

This is a proceeding in error to review a judgment of the district court granting a peremptory writ of man-

damus at the suit of two private citizens, compelling the plaintiff in error, a railway company, to continue the services of a station agent at a place on its line in Holt county in this state, called Stafford.

There is no dispute about the facts. The place in question is an unincorporated country neighborhood, having no distinctive name except that given to its station house by the respondent. There are in the immediate vicinity eight buildings, including two owned by the company. Of the remaining six, one is used in part as a dwelling and in part as a store, in which is carried for sale a stock of from three to five hundred dollars in value of general merchandise, and one is a blacksmith's shop and stable. The total population of the village, at the time of this controversy, was about forty persons of all ages, and of whom seven were employees of the company. There is very little passenger business at that point, and the freight traffic there is inconsiderable except for the shipment at certain seasons of the year of live stock and hay. Reasons are obvious. Five and two-thirds miles distant on the company's line in one direction, and seven miles in the other, are the villages respectively of Inman and Ewing, and five miles northward on the line of the Great Northern Railroad is Page. All these places are thriving communities of considerable size, in which are represented all descriptions of business, mercantile, mechanical and professional, usually found in country towns. Relators are not members of the community just described, but are the occupants of farms and ranches situate in its vicinity, and their counsel says in his brief that the proceeding is prosecuted "not merely for the town, but to a greater extent for the farming community," of whom there is, within a radius of four miles from the station, a population of twenty-nine families. A circle having that radius would extend to within two miles from Ewing, and one and two-thirds miles from Inman, and one mile from Page. It is obvious that, from aught that appears in the record, a majority of these twenty-nine families can be accommo-

dated with railway facilities at some of these latter named places equally as well or better than at Stafford. Nearly all the business transacted by the company at the last named station is in car-load lots, for which cars can be ordered and obtained from the section foreman stationed there, and it was not proposed or intended to discontinue the regular stoppage of trains at that place for the receipt and discharge of freight and passengers, but it was thought by the respondent that, during the winter and less busy months, the amount of traffic at that point did not justify the expense of the station agent, and that its patrons would not be seriously inconvenienced by his absence, and it proposed to suspend that functionary for an indefinite time, beginning on the first day of January, 1904. In the preceding month of December the company issued an order to that effect, which was the occasion of this lawsuit.

Counsel for the respective parties agree that no similar case can be found in the books, but the principles by which it is to be decided are, we think, not difficult of discovery, and have not failed of announcement by the courts. The general power to manage and control the business of a railroad company, including to establish, maintain and discontinue freight and passenger buildings and stations and to employ and discharge servants, is administrative in its character and of a discretionary nature, and, in the absence of legislation to the contrary, is vested in the company itself. It is a power which from the very nature of things the courts cannot themselves exercise, and it follows of necessity that they will not interfere with its exercise, unless in exceptional cases in which it is made clearly to appear that there has been an abuse of discretion amounting, in practical effect, to the denial of a public right or a repudiation of public obligations, which the corporation expressly or impliedly assumed in the acceptance of its charter and franchises. At the conclusion of a somewhat extended discussion of the subject in *State v. Republican Valley R. Co.*, 17 Neb. 647, this court say

that no court would interfere "except where it is made to appear that such interference is necessary to prevent an unjust discrimination, or an abuse of that discretion which must be conceded to reside in all private corporations in respect to their dealings with the public." And in *People v. Chicago & A. R. Co.*, 130 Ill. 175, the court say:

"It is undoubtedly the rule that railway companies, in the absence of statutory provisions limiting and restricting their powers, are vested with a very broad discretion in the matter of locating, constructing and operating their railways, and of locating and maintaining their freight and passenger stations. This discretion, however, is not absolute, but is subject to the condition that it must be exercised in good faith, and with a due regard to the necessities and convenience of the public."

This doctrine is approved and reasserted by the same court in *Mobile & O. R. Co. v. People*, 132 Ill. 559, the court saying:

"The company cannot be compelled, on the one hand, to locate stations at points where the cost of maintaining them will exceed the profits resulting therefrom to the company, nor allowed, on the other hand, to locate them so far apart as to practically deny to communities on the line of the road reasonable access to its use." And again touching another phase of the subject: "The duty to maintain or continue stations must, manifestly, rest upon the same principle, and a company cannot therefore be compelled to maintain or continue a station at a point, where the welfare of the company and the community in general requires that it be changed to some other point."

Such seems to be the unbroken tenor of the authorities, and the language of the supreme court of Iowa in *State v. Des Moines & K. C. R. Co.*, 87 Ia. 644, would have been aptly chosen as descriptive and decisive of the case before us. The court say:

"There is nothing in the case which tends to show that the managers of the road had any intention to deprive anyone of proper facilities for transacting business with the

company. * * * It appears to us that the owners of the road should not be interfered with in the management of their property, including the location of their stations, where, as in this case, there is no competent evidence that any patron of the road has been deprived of reasonable facilities for transacting business with the defendant."

We think that the foregoing principles and authorities are determinative of this case. Certainly it cannot be said that, under the circumstances disclosed by the record, the duty of the respondent to maintain an agent at Stafford is plain and unequivocal, or the right of the relators to demand that it so do is so clear and unquestionable as to bring the case within the often reiterated requirement of this court with reference to the remedy by mandamus. *State v. Bowman*, 45 Neb. 752; *State v. Nelson* 21 Neb. 572; *State v. Omaha*, 14 Neb. 265; *State v. Whipple*, 60 Neb. 650; *State v. Bartley*, 50 Neb. 874.

It does not appear to us that the patrons of the railroad company or the public would be seriously injured or inconvenienced by the proposed action of the company of which complaint is made, or that such action, if taken, would in the above quoted language of this court be "an abuse of its discretion with respect to its dealings with the public." Whether a private citizen having no peculiar interest and suffering no especial damage or injury can maintain a suit like this has not been debated and is not decided.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the action dismissed.

LETTON and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the action dismissed.

REVERSED.

BENJAMIN F. KNIGHT V. LANCASTER COUNTY ET AL.

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,804.

Statutes: AMENDMENTS. The act of April 1, 1901, entitled "An act to amend section 19 of chapter 10, Compiled Statutes, 1899, and to repeal said section as now existing (laws, 1901, ch. 11), is void, because the matter sought to be added by amendment is not germane to the subject of the section as enacted.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: **ALBERT J. CORNISH, LINCOLN FROST and EDWARD P. HOLMES, JUDGES.** *Affirmed.*

George A. Adams, for plaintiff in error.

J. L. Caldwell, contra.

AMES, O.

The plaintiff in error was elected treasurer of Lancaster county for the regular term of two years, beginning January 7, 1904. On or before said day he tendered to the county board an instrument in the form of an official bond signed by himself as principal, and by a corporation described as a surety or indemnity company, as surety, conditioned for the faithful performance of his official duties during said term. The instrument was accepted and approved by the board and duly filed. Afterwards he presented to the board a claim against the county for \$855 for moneys paid by him to said corporation as a premium or compensation for having signed the instrument as his surety. The board rejected the claim, and he appealed to the district court, where he again suffered defeat upon a general demurrer to his petition, setting forth, in substance, the foregoing facts. From a judgment of dismissal on the demurrer he prosecutes error to this court.

Several sections of chapter 10 of the Compiled Statutes entitled "Bonds and Oaths—Official," enacted in 1881, are devoted to a description of official bonds with respect to

their form and their obligatory force or effect, and the number and character of the persons requisite as sureties upon them, who, in case of county officers, are required to be "freeholders of the county in which such bonds are given." None of these matters is mentioned in section 19 of the act as it existed prior to 1901, but that section consisted wholly of a list of state, county, precinct and township officials, and of specifications of the amounts of penalties in the bonds required of them respectively, the list being preceded by the following language: "The following named officers shall give bonds with penalties in the following amounts, to wit: Governor \$50,000," etc. In 1901 the legislature attempted to amend this section by adding thereto the following: "Provided, that the authorities whose duty it is to approve bonds of the county officials may dispense with such bonds if in their judgment they shall deem it best so to do; provided, further, that if bonds are accepted by such officials from surety or indemnity companies the cost of such bonds may be paid by the county where such bonds are required." The district court was correctly of the opinion that the attempted amendment is void. The title of the amendatory act is "An act to amend section 19 of chapter 10, Compiled Statutes, 1899, and to repeal said section as now existing." This title indicates as the subject of legislation changes in the lists of officials and penalties, with which alone the section deals, but does not suggest a purpose to change the form, or the character of the sureties, of official bonds, or to impose upon counties any pecuniary burden with reference to the same, nor to enlarge the discretion or powers of county boards with respect thereto, but it is with reference to these latter matters alone that the attempted amendment deals.

This supposed proviso is the sole ground of the plaintiff's claim, and we therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

LETTON and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

AFFIRMED.

JAMES M. WECKERLY, APPELLANT, V. CADET TAYLOR ET AL.,
APPELLEES.

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,835.

1. **Creditors' Suit.** A judgment creditor, with the aid of equity, may reach any property or interest of his debtor not exempt from execution, which, with such aid, the said debtor might himself reach.
2. **Fraud: PLEADING.** An assignment of a chose in action, even without consideration, is not presumptively fraudulent as to a creditor who becomes such nearly four years afterwards, and such a presumption is not supplied by vague and general allegations, but circumstances must be pleaded from which fraud may be reasonably inferred.
3. **Actions: LIMITATION.** Actions for relief on the ground of fraud must be brought within four years from the discovery of the fraud or such facts and circumstances as are indicative thereof, and, if followed up, would lead to its discovery.

APPEAL from the district court for Douglas county:
CHARLES T. DICKINSON, JUDGE. *Affirmed in part.*

Arthur C. Wakeley, for appellant.

A. S. Churchill, contra.

AMES, C.

This is an appeal from a judgment sustaining separate general demurrers to a petition and dismissing an action as to certain defendants. The alleged causes of action arise out of distinct facts and circumstances, so that we think a demurrer for misjoinder, which was filed by some of the defendants, would have been properly

sustained, and we are consequently compelled to divide the case into two branches and treat of each separately.

It is alleged that in 1890, Cadet Taylor, H. O. Devries, the Globe Loan & Trust Company, a corporation, and the Globe Savings Bank, a corporation, purchased a tract of real estate situate in Omaha, in this state, paying therefor the sum of \$18,000, and procuring the title to be conveyed to one McIntyre, the latter paying no consideration therefor; that immediately afterwards McIntyre, also without consideration and at the request of the purchasers, conveyed the property to the Globe Building Company, another corporation, of which the purchasers were and have remained the principal stockholders. The idea that this transaction was fraudulent as to creditors, existing or subsequent, is not alleged in the petition, and is emphatically repudiated by the plaintiff in his brief, but it is alleged that such conveyance was, and was intended to be, of the bare legal title only, the purchasers or their representatives remaining continuously in possession in person or by their tenants, and managing or controlling the property and receiving its rents, issues and profits from that time until the present. Whence, it is contended, a trust resulted to the purchasers, and they are, and at all times have been, the sole equitable and beneficial owners of the property in the proportions in which they contributed to the payment of the purchase money. In 1896, more than five years after the conclusion of this transaction, the purchasers became obligated to the plaintiff upon a bond, in which the savings bank was principal and the others sureties, and upon which a liability accrued sometime later, and upon which suit was brought, and afterwards judgment obtained in March, 1901. Execution having been issued upon the judgment and returned unsatisfied, it was alleged that all the defendants were insolvent except for the property in question and other property somewhat similarly situated, and prayed that title to the tract described be adjudged to be in the purchasers, and be subjected to judicial sale for the satisfaction of the judgment.

This version of the transaction excludes the idea that the property was conveyed to the corporation as a gift or in exchange for its stocks or obligations, and it also excludes the idea of possession or ownership or claim thereof by the corporation, so as to put the statute of limitations in motion or create a title by prescription, and, as we are constrained to think, the petition states in this regard a cause of action. The plaintiff, with the aid of equity, may reach any property right or interest not exempt from execution that the judgment debtors might, with like aid, reach themselves; and it is undeniable that, if the story told by the pleading is true, the latter are entitled to have the property conveyed to themselves upon demand at any time, and that equity would, if necessary, enforce the demand. *Millard v. Parsell*, 57 Neb. 178; *Harris v. King*, 16 Ark. 122; *Havens v. Bliss*, 26 N. J. Eq. 363; *Straton v. Dialogue*, 16 N. J. Eq. 70; *Bear v. Koenigstein*, 16 Neb. 67; *Hews v. Kenney*, 43 Neb. 815; 1 Perry, *Trusts* (5th ed.), sec. 126; *Robinson v. Springfield Co.*, 21 Fla. 203; *White v. Sheldon*, 4 Nev. 280.

But this theory of the transaction excludes, as we have already said, the idea of fraud, or that the estate was conveyed to the building company in fraud of creditors; and the rights and remedies of the plaintiff as to it must therefore be measured by those of his judgment debtors, which they cannot exceed. If the transaction by which the title was conveyed to the building company was fraudulent, it would fall within the principles and authorities of the second branch of this discussion, and the judgment of the district court would have to be affirmed. The *Sherman & McConnell Drug Company*, another defendant whose demurrer was sustained and as to which the action was dismissed, is a lessee of the building company, whose fate it may share, and was, of course, properly joined with it as a defendant, as well for its own protection as to enable the plaintiff to obtain complete relief. As to both these defendants, we think the demurrer was erroneously sustained.

The other branch of the inquiry pertains to the demurrer of the Putnam Company, which was also sustained, with a judgment of dismissal. With respect to this matter it is alleged that the defendant, the Globe Loan & Trust Company, a corporation, acquired from one Ijams and wife on the 7th day of June, 1892, a mortgage on a tract of real estate, and assigned it, without consideration, on the 15th day of June, 1892, to the Linwood Park Land Company, another corporation. Thereafter the last named company procured title by foreclosure proceedings of the property described in the mortgage, and in the year 1900 conveyed a part thereof to the Putnam Company and a part to Henryton Land Company, another corporation. Concerning these transactions and the several corporations named as having had to do with them, the petition alleges: "That the said Linwood Park Land Company, said Putnam Company, said Henryton Land Company, and the said Globe Building Company were created and organized, and have always been managed, controlled and operated by the said Cadet Taylor, the said W. B. Taylor (not a party to this action) and the said H. O. Devries down to the death of said Devries on February 25, 1900, and since the death of said Devries have been controlled, managed and carried on by the said Cadet Taylor and said W. B. Taylor. That said several corporations were devised, created and organized, in so far as the said Cadet Taylor and H. O. Devries were interested and concerned, purely and solely for the purpose of defrauding the creditors of the several companies, and existing and future creditors of the said Cadet Taylor and said H. O. Devries, and especially the plaintiff above named, and for the principal purpose of taking possession of the assets and more effectually hindering, delaying and defrauding the creditors of said Globe Savings Bank and said Globe Loan & Trust Company, and to afford the means and machinery of transferring the property and assets of the said several corporations and individuals from one to another indiscriminately and interchangeably; and that the said several

corporations were created and existed, and especially the said Henryton Land Company and the Putnam Company and the said Globe Building Company now exist and are carried on, for the express purpose of hindering, delaying and defrauding the creditors and persons holding claims and judgments against the said Cadet Taylor, H. O. Devries and the Globe Savings Bank." Now, it will be observed that, according to the allegations of the petition, this last transaction was radically different in character and purpose from that which we previously discussed. According to it the mortgage from Ijams and wife to the Globe Loan & Trust Company had its inception more than four years before the execution of the instrument upon which the plaintiff obtained his judgment, in furtherance of a fraudulent and elaborate scheme and device to hinder, delay and defraud the creditors existing and subsequent of Taylor, Devries and the two corporations, the savings bank and the trust company, and particularly the plaintiff; but it is not alleged that at that time the parties or corporations, or any of them, were or was insolvent, or had any debts or creditors, or contemplated having any or having any dealings with the plaintiff. Neither is it alleged that the money with which the trust company purchased the mortgage from Ijams and wife was not the money of that corporation, which it had a lawful right to invest in that manner. The plaintiff did not become a creditor of the savings bank until March 30, 1896, nearly four years after the assignment of the mortgage to the Linwood Company, and the bank did not become insolvent until the month of June following, when the bond, which is the foundation of the plaintiff's judgment, was, on the 9th day of that month, executed by the trust company, Devries, and Cadet Taylor and one Mount, as sureties, pursuant to the statute relative to insolvent banks. It was not until three years after the instrument became effectual by official approval on June 26 that a cause of action accrued on the bond, nor until nearly two years still subsequently that a judgment was rendered

thereon. Now, with respect to this Ijams mortgage, it is to be observed that it is not a case like the former of the purchase of and payment for land by one person and its conveyance to another, but of an assignment of a chose in action, which appears, if it is not distinctly alleged, to have been absolute between the parties. The averments of the petition concerning these several corporations are so extremely vague and general as to express no definite idea at all. They are said to have been organized, so far as the defendants Taylor and Devries were interested and concerned, for the purpose of defrauding their creditors, and to afford the means and machinery of transferring their property and assets interchangeably, and concealing it from their creditors, but who else were concerned, and what was the capital stock of the corporations, and by whom owned, and what were the motives and knowledge of other stockholders, if any there were, or what property or assets any of the corporations at any time had, other than the mortgage in question, or whether Taylor and Devries, or either of them, were stockholders or ever had any creditors, existing or subsequent, except the plaintiff, the pleading does not say. For aught that appears to the contrary, all the defendants, including the savings bank, were at the time the mortgage transaction took place in June, 1892, solvent and prosperous. The bank was presumably indebted to the depositors in like manner as such institutions usually and necessarily are indebted, but it is incredible that the defendants or any of them at that time contemplated that the plaintiff would become a depositor of the bank nearly four years later, and that the bank a few months still later would become insolvent, and become obligated, with the other defendants as securities for it, upon an instrument which, at the time of the transaction sought to be impeached, was unknown to the law, but which was authorized by a statute subsequently enacted. An assignment of a chose in action, even without consideration, is not presumed to be fraudulent as against creditors who become such not until four years

later, and such a presumption is not supplied by vague and general allegations, but circumstances must be pleaded from which fraud in fact can reasonably be inferred. If a petition fails in this respect and to this extent, it is obnoxious to a demurrer. The several corporations, whether organized with fraudulent design or not, were distinct legal entities, whose existence was disclosed by the public records of the county, which also disclosed that the trust company was the mortgagee of the Ijams mortgage and had assigned it to the Linwood Park Land Company nearly four years before the plaintiff became a creditor of the bank, and more than four years before the bond in question became obligatory. These facts were notice to him, and to all the world, that these institutions were distinct legal entities, separate from each other and from the savings banks, presumably each owning assets and having rights and incurring obligations separate from every other. There was, to say the least, nothing in the circumstances or situation tending to mislead him to his prejudice. He extended his credit in the first instance to the savings bank alone. Afterwards the state accepted the obligation, as sureties, of Taylor, Devries, Mount and the trust company. None of these parties except the last is alleged to have ever had any interest in the instrument in controversy which it retained only seven days. Neither the Linwood Park Land Company, the assignee of the mortgage, nor the Putnam Company, which acquired part of the mortgaged estate after foreclosure, is charged with ever having had in its possession or under its control any specific property of the savings bank or of Taylor or of Devries, or to be or to have been in any way legally bound for the debts or obligations of any of them. The statute provides (sec. 20, ch. 32, Comp. St. 1903; Ann. St. 5969), that "no conveyance or charge shall be adjudged fraudulent, as against creditors or purchasers, solely on the ground that it was not founded on a valuable consideration." *Boldt v. First Nat. Bank*, 59 Neb. 283; *Graham v. Estate of Townsend*, 62 Neb. 364; *Robinson Notion Co.*

v. Foot, 42 Neb. 156, and cases cited. Nearly eleven years intervened between the assignment of the mortgage and the recovery of the plaintiff's judgment, and nearly five years between the latter event and the happening of the insolvency of the bank, and eleven years and six months before the beginning of this suit. During all this time the petition of the plaintiff discloses that he knew or had the means of knowing all the facts and circumstances detailed in his petition. If they are indicative of a fraudulent transfer of the property of his debtors for the purpose of putting it beyond his reach, they afforded him a cause of action at least as soon as the liability of the savings bank to him became fixed, which was not later than the date of its insolvency and suspension of payment. *Gillespie v. Cooper*, 36 Neb. 775; *Hellman v. Davis*, 24 Neb. 793; *Westerfelt v. Filter*, 2 Neb. (Unof.) 731.

We think therefore that the demurrer of the defendant, the Putnam Company, was properly sustained, and it is recommended that the judgment of the district court dismissing the action as to that defendant be affirmed; but that the judgment as to the Globe Building Company and the Sherman & McConnell Drug Company be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

LETTON and OLDEHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court dismissing the action as to the Putnam Company be affirmed, but that the judgment as to the Globe Building Company and the Sherman & McConnell Drug Company be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

JUDGMENT ACCORDINGLY.

VIRGINIA G. FORD, APPELLANT, V. CARL LOUISE AXELSON ET
AL., APPELLEES.

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,842.

1. **Quitclaim: AFTER-ACQUIRED TITLE.** If a grantor of quitclaim obtains an instrument that evidences and fortifies the very estate or interest which his deed purports and was intended and effectual to convey, such instrument inures to the benefit of his grantee.
2. **Purchaser: GOOD FAITH.** "A purchaser with notice from a prior purchaser who was entitled to protection as a *bona fide* purchaser without notice, is himself entitled to protection against the previous equitable claim, which was invalid as against his grantor." LAKE, C. J. in *Garland v. Wells*, 15 Neb. 298.

APPEAL from the district court for Gosper county:
ROBERT C. ORR, JUDGE. *Reversed with directions.*

R. J. Ahara and H. M. Sinclair, for appellant.

O. C. Bozarth and J. T. McClure, contra.

AMES, C.

The record in this case recites, and the briefs and arguments of counsel discuss, a tangled web of circumstances of no slight dimensions and complexity, but we think that the legal rights of the parties are to be determined by a consideration of a very few of them, to which alone our attention will be confined.

On March 6, 1897, Emma S. Challberg and Olive M. Axelson were in the possession, and appeared by the public records to be the absolute owners in fee, of a tract of land described in the pleadings. If any other person or persons had any right, title or interest, legal or equitable, in or to the property, or any of it, that fact was known only to such persons and to the parties named. On that day they executed a mortgage upon the lands to Fred P. McCormick to secure an indebtedness evidenced by their

promissory notes. In 1899, the indebtedness having become due and remaining unpaid, a suit in foreclosure was begun and prosecuted by the mortgagee against the mortgagors and all persons having a known or apparent interest in the lands, and terminated in the usual decree of foreclosure and sale on the 7th day of March in that year. Pursuant to the decree the lands were duly and regularly appraised, advertised and offered for sale, and were sold on the 9th day of July, 1900, to the mortgagee, who was the highest bidder therefor, and the sale was duly confirmed on the 4th day of the following December. On the second day of December, 1902, a sheriff's deed, pursuant to the sale and confirmation, was executed and delivered to the purchaser, and on the same day made of record in the clerk's office of the county. On the 11th day of March, 1901, after the sale and confirmation, but before the execution of the sheriff's deed, McCormick, for a valuable consideration, made an assignment of the decree of foreclosure to the plaintiff and appellant herein Virginia G. Ford, and on the 26th day of the same month, upon the same consideration, quitclaimed and conveyed the land to her by deed.

It is not disputed or questioned that McCormick was a *bona fide* mortgagee, plaintiff and purchaser for value in all that the term expresses or implies. There can be no doubt, therefore, that, upon the entry of the order of the confirmation, not afterwards impeached, he became the full and absolute owner of the entire equitable or beneficial title to the land in question; and it has been already decided by this court that a deed of mere quitclaim and release is sufficient to convey such title to the grantee therein. *Leavitt v. Bell*, 55 Neb. 57. The deed of McCormick to appellant is, however, an instrument of higher dignity than a deed merely of quitclaim, demise and release. By it the grantor expressly quitclaims and "conveys" the land, and by section 50, chapter 73, Compiled Statutes, 1903 (Ann. St. 10253), it is enacted that "every conveyance of real estate shall pass all the interest of the

grantor therein, unless a contrary intent can be reasonably inferred from the terms used." There can be no doubt, therefore, that this deed conveyed all the equitable and beneficial title to the land to Mrs. Ford, and that when the sheriff's deed was subsequently executed and delivered it inured to her benefit, and that she became thus invested with as complete and unassailable a title as her grantor would have done if the former instrument had not been executed or the decree assigned. *Hagensick v. Caster*, 53 Neb. 495, and *Troxell v. Stevens*, 57 Neb. 329, holding that an after-acquired title by a grantor in a deed of quitclaim does not inure to his grantee, and other authorities to like effect, are not in point for two reasons: First, the deed in question is not a mere deed of quitclaim but one of conveyance; and second, the grantee in the sheriff's deed did not obtain by that instrument an after-acquired title, within the meaning of the decisions cited, but merely an evidence and fortification of the title which he had already obtained by the judicial sale and confirmation, and which he had previously conveyed away, so that if his deed to the appellant had been one merely of quitclaim and release, it would have estopped him from claiming that the interest he had parted with thereby had reverted in him by virtue of an instrument whose sole office is to evidence its validity and value. However, McCormick's deed to the appellant purported to convey the tract of land, that is, the entire title, and is more properly described as a grant of the land without express covenants than as a quitclaim, and it, therefore, by force of section 51 of the chapter above cited, would have conveyed any after-acquired interest.

On the 4th day of May, 1901, after the judicial sale had been confirmed and after the deed from the purchaser to appellant had been executed and delivered and made of record, there was spread upon the real estate records of the county a writing subscribed by the defendant herein, Andrew Axelson, and purporting to have been made not only in his own behalf, but also on the behalf of his

mother, Cari Louise Axelson, and all of the other defendants herein; and in which it was recited, in substance, that the mortgagors at and before the execution of the mortgage were not the owners of the mortgaged premises in their own right, but in trust for themselves and the defendants as the widow and heirs at law of one Axel Axelson, deceased, and proclaiming an intent by said persons to assert and maintain their alleged rights and interests in the property accordingly. Shortly afterwards this action was begun by the appellant to procure said writing to be adjudged a cloud upon her title, and to obtain a decree perpetually quieting the latter against it. The defendants filed a cross-petition, in which they asserted the claim set forth in the writing, and averred that at and before the plaintiff obtained her conveyances she was cognizant of the alleged interests and titles of the defendants, and of each of them severally, and of the circumstances out of which the same were averred to have arisen, and had dealt with the land in fraud of them, and prayed, in effect, that the plaintiff be adjudged to hold the title to the lands upon the same trusts and confidences upon which it was alleged to have been formerly held by the mortgagors, and that she be decreed to account for the value of the use and occupation of the lands during her possession of them, and that title to the lands be adjudged and quieted in the defendants in conformity to the terms of the alleged trusts. There was a reply consisting of a general denial, and a trial which resulted in a decree in substantial conformity to the prayer of the cross-petition.

To set forth the issues more at length, or the evidence at all, would be fruitless of benefit or advantage to any one. It is a familiar elementary principle, at least as old as any existing system of jurisprudence, that, in the language quoted and adopted by this court in *Garland v. Wells*, 15 Neb. 298, "a purchaser with notice from a prior purchaser who was entitled to protection as a *bona fide* purchaser without notice, is himself entitled to protection

Hiett v. Hiett.

against the previous equitable claim, which was invalid as against his grantor." Accepting the defendants' own version of the transactions under investigation, this language is exactly descriptive of the present case. The plaintiff, now appellant, is a purchaser from McCormick, the mortgagee and purchaser at the judicial sale, who, it is conceded by all parties, was entitled to protection as a *bona fide* purchaser for value, without notice. Therefore, whatever equitable rights the defendants, or any of them, may have had in the premises, and however cognizant of them the plaintiff may have been, it is immaterial to inquire, because she is entitled to the protection enjoyed by her grantor against them.

It is therefore recommended that the judgment of the district court be reversed, and the cross-petitions dismissed, and the cause remanded, with instructions to enter a decree in conformity with the prayer of the plaintiff's petition.

LETTON and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed, and the cross-petitions dismissed, and the cause remanded, with instructions to enter a decree in conformity with the prayer of the plaintiff's petition.

REVERSED.

ROSE HIETT, APPELLANT, v. WESLEY HIETT, APPELLEE.

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,850. .

A contract between husband and wife, made after and in consequence of severance of the marital relation and permanent separation, and providing for a division of property, and containing mutual releases of rights and obligations relative thereto, will be re-

Hlett v. Hlett.

spected by the courts as presumably fair and valid, and a just and equitable adjustment of the matters of which it treats. But the courts will scrutinize such transactions closely, without too much regard for formal rules of pleading and procedure, and see to it that no unconscionable advantage is taken through fraud or intimidation, or even by reason of ignorance, passion or improvidence.

Appeal from the district court for Valley county:
JAMES N. PAUL, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

A. Norman and H. Westover, for appellant.

E. J. Clements and Clements Bros., contra.

AMES, C.

The district court granted the petition of a wife for a decree of absolute divorce on the ground of extreme cruelty, but denied permanent alimony. She appeals from the latter part of the decree, and there is no cross-appeal.

At the time of the marriage, in 1887, both of the parties were well advanced in years; she being a widow, the mother of six children varying in age from five to seventeen years, and he a widower, the father of four children of mature ages, all of whom had ceased to reside with him. He and his wife and her children resided together and constituted the family until the children, one after another, reached years of maturity and established homes of their own, and thereafter the marriage relation subsisted until 1902, when a scene of violence occurred, and a final separation took place, and the wife sought and found an asylum with her married sons and daughters. There was no issue of the marriage, and the parties, at the time it was contracted, were both impecunious, except for an inconsiderable amount of money possessed by each, which was consumed by family expenses. The children of the wife, as long as they remained members of the household, contributed by their labor and earnings to the common fund, and were maintained out of it, and from time to

Hlett v. Hlett.

time as the boys went away and established homes of their own, they were given articles of personal property and moderate sums of money aggregating several hundreds of dollars in amount and value. The family were laborious and frugal, except that the husband was addicted to the excessive use of intoxicants, and by the course of life indicated, which can be better imagined than described, and by the rise in the value of land bought and used for a farm and family homestead, had accumulated, at the time of the separation, property of a value variously estimated by witnesses, but probably worth not far from \$6,000, subject to an indebtedness secured by a mortgage on the farm of \$2,600, leaving a surplus of say \$3,400 to \$3,600. The personal property consisted of about a thousand dollars' worth of neat cattle, and of other live stock, and of utensils, such as are usually kept on a farm, to the estimated value of about \$1,500.

A few days after the separation, the husbands of two of the daughters of the plaintiff and two of her sons visited the defendant, and made an agreement with him on her behalf for a perpetual separation thereafter, and for a division of property in contemplation and consideration thereof. For that purpose they visited the farm of the defendant, and inspected the premises and acquainted themselves with the quantity and character of his possessions. It is not proved that he was guilty of any fraud, concealment or intimidation in the transaction, or that they did not acquire fully and accurately all the information they desired. The plaintiff was not present, she having entrusted the protection of her interests to the persons named. After the matter had been amicably adjusted to the apparent satisfaction of all persons concerned, the plaintiff was called upon to attend, with the defendant and the intermediaries, at the offices of a firm of attorneys in a neighboring village, where the agreement was reduced to writing, and executed by both parties in the manner prescribed by law for the execution and

acknowledgment of deeds of real estate. The instrument recited the occasion and purpose of its execution, viz., the perpetual separation of husband and wife, the release by the latter of her dower and homestead rights in the land, and her interest in so much of the personal estate as was not set apart to her in severalty and freed from the claims of her husband, and which consisted of 28 of the 50 head of neat cattle and a horse, harness and buggy, certain articles of household furniture, certain domestic fowls, and 50 bushels each of corn and oats. What all these articles were worth it is difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain; the neat cattle alone probably not far from \$500, and the rest from \$100 to \$200, or possibly more. Doubtless the value, both of what was taken and of what was left, was considerably greater for use than for sale. The instrument concluded with mutual releases of property, and marital rights and obligations, except the right of either party to prosecute an action for a divorce. A division and separation of the property pursuant to the agreement took place at once, and shortly afterwards this action was begun. The answer pleaded this instrument in bar of the demand of the petition for permanent alimony, and the reply assails it, in general terms, as being "unfair and unjust," and as having been obtained from the plaintiff in consequence of threats and ill usage by the defendant, and of her ignorance of her rights in the property divided. But there is no averment of any specific act or fact of fraud, ill-usage or intimidation with respect to making or carrying out of the agreement, and, as we have said, none is proved, and we are cited to neither principle nor authority for holding that any will be presumed. The whole tenor of the argument of counsel for appellant is that the agreement was improvidently made. Whether such fact, if it existed, would authorize the court to set aside or disregard the instrument, we are not called upon to decide, and do not decide. The weight both of reason and authority is that such agreements, made after separation, are, if fair and free from fraud,

imposition or undue means, in furtherance of good morals and in accord with sound policy. They stand upon a quite different basis from those made in contemplation and consideration of future separation. *Daniels v. Benedict*, 97 Fed. 367; *Galusha v. Galusha*, 116 N. Y. 635, 22 N. E. 1114. No prior decision of this court in conflict herewith has been brought to our attention. In *Campbell v. Campbell*, 73 Ia. 482, 35 N. W. 522, the only matter in litigation was temporary alimony, or "suit money," as it is called, which an agreement and division like that in controversy does not affect, and which in this case may be regarded as expressly excepted by the terms of the instrument itself. Whatever else is discussed in the opinion is mere *obiter*. In *McKnight v. McKnight*, 5 Neb. (Unof.) 260, no contract of settlement and mutual releases, and no final division of property, was either pleaded or proved. The husband had conveyed certain property to his wife because of the separation, but it was not shown that the conveyance was either made or accepted as a final adjustment of their marital rights.

We do not, however, intend to commit ourselves to the doctrine contended for by appellee, and which is, perhaps, held by some of the authorities, that an instrument like that under discussion is to be treated in all respects like other contracts upon a valid consideration between parties *sui juris*, and impeachable for fraud or duress only by compliance with the strict rules of procedure and proof applicable to suits involving such agreements. While there is no presumption against the fairness and good faith of such arrangements, we think that the presumption in their favor is not so strong as in cases of contracts between parties not so related, and that public policy, as well as due regard for the disabilities of the "weaker vessel," requires that the court should scrutinize them closely, without too much respect for formal rules of pleading and procedure, and see to it that no unconscionable advantage obtained through fraud or intimidation, or even by reason of ignorance, improvidence or passion, is availed of to the

unjust benefit of the stronger and more capable or more crafty spouse. We do not find, however, any of these elements in the record before us. The persons who made the contract and settlement on the behalf of the appellant were her next of kin and their spouses. They were certainly the peers in intelligence and experience of the broken old man with whom they dealt. There was no fraud or concealment, and they labored under no delusion, either as to the character of value or the property, or as to the legal or equitable rights of the parties thereto; and they were fully cognizant of all the history and circumstances of its acquisition and accumulation; and they furthermore had an interest, both direct and indirect, in seeing to it that their mother secured all to which she was entitled. In the absence of a showing to the contrary, the presumption is strong that they succeeded in attaining that object. We do not feel called upon to go into an elaborate discussion of items and values of property. Alimony is not to be awarded either as an emolument to the wife or as a punishment for the husband. The defendant is advanced in years, and left alone to struggle unassisted with a comparatively heavy burden of indebtedness, and regard must be had for his subsistence in his old age. The plaintiff obtained by the settlement at least as much as, or probably considerably more than, she would have acquired under the statute of descents and distributions if her husband had died intestate on the day before the contract was made. We think that under the circumstances she has nothing of which to complain and recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

LEITON and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

AFFIRMED.

HENRY F. RIECK V. JENES N. GRIFFIN.

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,820.

1. Pleading: DEPARTURE. Petition in the district court examined, and *held* not a departure from the issues tendered in the county court.
2. Foreign Statute: SEAL: EVIDENCE. The public seal of another state affixed to a copy of a written law of that state is admissible as evidence of such law.
3. ———: PAROL EVIDENCE. The unwritten law of another state may be proved by parol evidence.
4. Instructions examined, and *held* not prejudicial.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: WILLIAM A. REDICK, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

Charles Battelle and William Baird & Sons, for plaintiff in error.

Rich & Clapp and Stillman & Price, contra.

OLDHAM, C.

This was an action originally instituted in the county court of Douglas county, Nebraska, on the following due bill, or note of hand: "Oakland, Ark., Dec. 26, 1899. Due J. N. Griffin, on or before Feb. 10, 1900, Seven Hundred and fifty Dollars (\$750) on the John Noe tract of land lying in Marion Co. Ark. as follows: N. $\frac{1}{2}$ N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ & S. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ & N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 34, township 21 range 15 W. North White River, for the purchase money of same. (Signed) Henry F. Rieck."

The petition alleged that defendant had paid upon said note an amount duly indorsed thereon: "Received the sum of \$171.05, being balance of purchase money after paying all costs, for which lands sold, this Oct. 27, 1900." The petition prayed judgment for the balance due on the note, with interest. The answer denied that plaintiff was the owner and the real party in interest in the

note, and alleged that, if defendant signed the note, his signature was procured through fraud and misrepresentation of the plaintiff as to the nature and character of the instrument signed. The answer, for further defense, alleged that on the 10th day of April, 1900, the plaintiff with one John Noe, as parties plaintiff, began an action in equity in Marion county, Arkansas, against the defendant to foreclose a vendor's lien upon the premises for the unpaid purchase money; that, on constructive service on the defendant, said action was prosecuted to a final judgment, and the premises sold and purchased by one R. L. Berry, to whom was issued a certificate of purchase, which was transferred to the plaintiff, J. N. Griffin; that the sale was confirmed, and deed issued to said J. N. Griffin, who became, thereupon, the owner of said real estate. The answer also pleads a counterclaim for \$800 of the purchase money advanced, and a \$150 alleged to have been given to the plaintiff for the purchase of options, which plaintiff failed to make. Plaintiff, by way of reply to this answer, denied that any fraud had been practiced on the defendant in procuring his signature to the note in suit; admitted that an action had been prosecuted in Marion county, Arkansas, for the foreclosure of a vendor's lien, and pleaded the laws of the state of Arkansas, which authorized such action; denied that plaintiff was purchaser at the judicial sale, and admitted that he had purchased the certificate, for a valuable consideration, on which he had subsequently procured a deed to the premises. On a trial in the county court, defendant had a judgment, and the cause was removed by appeal to the district court for Douglas county, where, on a trial to the court and jury, plaintiff had a verdict and judgment for \$594.51, and to reverse this judgment defendant brings error to this court.

The plaintiff filed a new petition in the district court, in which he alleged the entire transaction connected with the signing of the note, the proceeding to foreclose the vendor's lien, and the laws of Arkansas authorizing the

petition. Defendant filed a motion to strike from the petition the allegations with reference to the laws of Arkansas and the foreclosure proceeding, as they were a departure from the issues tendered in the county court. This motion was overruled. The action of the court in overruling this motion is urged as erroneous in defendant's brief.

We are unable to see any departure from the original issue tendered in the county court. The suit was on a due bill, or a note of hand. The proceeding for the foreclosure of the vendor's lien had been pleaded in the county court in defendant's answer as a bar to the right of further recovery on the instrument. A reply had been filed in that court pleading the laws of Arkansas, which authorized the proceedings. While it was not requisite for the plaintiff to anticipate this defense, yet it was, at most, error without prejudice not to do so.

The next alleged error called to our attention is as to the action of the trial court in admitting proof of a digest of the statutes of Arkansas. The sections of the digest offered in evidence bore the following certificate:

"State of Arkansas, County of Pulaski, ss. I, John W. Crockett, secretary of state in and for the state of Arkansas, duly qualified and acting, do hereby certify that the foregoing sections of the digest of the statutes of the state of Arkansas, compiled in the year 1884, which are numbered, secs. 4994, 5172, and 5170, are true and correct copies of said sections of the digest of the statutes of the laws of the state of Arkansas, compiled in the year 1884, and that said sections of the law are still in full force and effect and have not been repealed or amended and are now a part of the statutory laws of the state of Arkansas. Witness my hand and seal of office on this 11th day of May, 1903. Jno. W. Crockett, Secretary of State. (Seal.)"

This certificate, we think, is sufficient under the provisions of section 420 of the code, which is as follows: "The public seal of the state or county affixed to a copy of a written law or other public writing, is also admissible as evidence of such law or writing respectively; the un-

written law of any other state or government may be proved as fact by parol evidence, and also by the books of reports of cases adjudged in their courts." Objections are also urged against the action of the court in admitting in proof of the unwritten law of the state of Arkansas the testimony of an attorney at law of that state. Our statute, however, as before set out, admits oral proof of the unwritten law of a sister state, and the witness offered showed himself qualified by long years of experience in the practice of law in all courts of that state, to give such testimony.

Objections are urged against the instructions given by the trial court. But a careful examination of the entire charge to the jury shows that the instructions were as favorable to the defendant as either the evidence or law would warrant. Finding no reversible error in the record, we therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and LETTON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the above opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

SIMEON WEST V. C. A. LUNGREN ET AL.

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,838.

1. **Tenancy: PRESUMPTION.** A tenancy from year to year will be presumed, where a tenant remains in possession after the expiration of his term, and his tenancy is recognized by the landlord. *Critchfield v. Remaley*, 21 Neb. 178, followed and approved.
2. ———: **EVIDENCE.** This rule is, however, only a rule of presumption, and the presumption is rebutted by proof of a different agreement, or of facts inconsistent with the presumption. *Montgomery v. Willis*, 45 Neb. 435, followed and approved.

ERROR to the district court for Antelope county: JOHN F. BOYD, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

E. D. Kilbourn, for plaintiff in error.

O. A. Williams, *contra.*

OLDHAM, C.

This was an action in forcible entry and detainer to recover the possession of 80 acres of land situated in Antelope county, Nebraska. The cause was originated before a justice of the peace of said county, and taken by appeal to the district court. On a trial in the district court to a jury, there were a verdict and judgment of restitution for plaintiff in the action, and to reverse this judgment the defendant brings error to this court.

It appears from the evidence that in the year 1884 the defendant in the court below leased the premises from James Gillispie, the then owner, for a period of five years, by an oral agreement; that he subsequently entered upon the premises and continued in possession thereof, for an annual rental of one-third of the crop raised thereon, until the time this suit was instituted; that he was on the land when James Gillispie died, in the year 1901. After Gillispie's death, a partition suit was brought, and the lands in controversy, with other lands, were sold, and plaintiff in the court below purchased these lands at the partition sale. It also appeared that in November, 1901, Josie Gillispie, executrix of the estate of James Gillispie, deceased, had a conversation with defendant in the court below, in which she requested him to remain another year on the premises, until the lands should be disposed of by the court, and that he did so. With reference to this conversation, defendant West testified as follows:

A. Well now, I did have a conversation with her.

Q. You agreed at that time with her that you would remain on there for the year 1902, didn't you?

A. She asked me if I was going to stay there another year. I told her I had not made any arrangements for anything different. Well, she said: "I want you to stay another year, or longer, if necessary." She says: "I don't know when that land will be sold. I don't want to change renters."

Q. When was that, that you had this talk with Josie Gillispie?

A. Last part of November, 1901.

Q. And related to the crop of 1902?

A. Next year.

Q. You knew that she had taken charge of the premises?

A. I did.

Q. And that she had authority over the renting of the premises for that year?

A. Yes, she had authority.

The executrix testified that she only rented the premises for one year, as she had no authority to rent them longer. Before the termination of this tenancy, a notice of more than three days was served on the defendant to vacate the premises on March 1, 1903. On the 12th of March following, this suit was instituted.

No complaint is lodged against any of the instructions given by the trial court, the sole contention being that defendant West was entitled to a six months' notice under the statute to terminate his tenancy. It is conceded by counsel that the five years' oral lease under which the tenancy was initiated was within the ban of the statute of frauds, but it is also conceded that the subsequent entrance and occupancy of the premises by the defendant, and the payment of rent, and acceptance of the same by the lessor, created a tenancy from year to year, which could only be terminated by the statutory notice, or by a subsequent agreement between the parties. So the only question to be determined is whether or not there was sufficient competent evidence in the record, of a subsequent agreement between the parties, to raise a question of fact for the determination of a jury.

In *Montgomery v. Willis*, 45 Neb. 434, IRVINE, C., speaking for the court, with reference to a tenancy from year to year, said:

"Such a tenancy will be presumed where a tenant remains in possession after the expiration of his term, and his tenancy is recognized by the landlord, where no new contract was made. *Critchfield v. Remaley*, 21 Neb. 178. This rule is, however, only a rule of presumption, and the presumption is rebutted by proof of a different agreement, or of facts inconsistent with the presumption. *Shipman v. Mitchell*, 64 Tex. 174; *Williamson v. Paxton*, 18 Gratt. (Va.) 475; *Grant v. White*, 42 Mo. 285; *Secor v. Pestana*, 37 Ill. 525."

Now, we think that, under the facts and circumstances proved in the instant case, there was sufficient evidence to support the finding of the jury that a new contract for the leasing of the premises for the year 1902 was entered into between defendant in the court below and the executrix of the estate of James Gillispie, deceased.

We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and LETTON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the above opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

ALBERT PALMER ET AL., APPELLEES, V. THOMAS A. SAWYER,
SHERIFF, ET AL., APPELLANTS.

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,848.

1. **Homestead.** In its inception a homestead is a parcel of land on which the family resides, and which is to them a home. It is constituted by the two acts of selection and residence, in compliance with the terms of the law conferring it. When these things exist *bona fide*, the essential elements of the homestead

right exist, of which the persons entitled to it cannot be divested by acts or influences beyond their volition. *Galligher v. Smiley*, 28 Neb. 189, followed and approved.

2. —. A debtor who has acquired a homestead does not lose his right to the exemption, where he continues to occupy the property as a home, though, by reason of death and the removal of his family, he has no one living with him.

APPEAL from the district court for Saline county:
LESLIE G. HURD, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

Pope & Brown, for appellants.

Joshua Palmer, contra.

OLDHAM, C.

This was an action to enjoin the sale under an execution of a tract of land containing about twelve and a half acres, situated in Saline county, Nebraska, the plaintiffs claiming the land to be exempt as a homestead. The prayer for injunction was granted in the court below, and to reverse this judgment defendants appeal to this court.

The material facts underlying this controversy are that the plaintiff, Albert Palmer, purchased the land in controversy, in the year 1898; that at the time of the purchase plaintiff was a widower, with three minor children living with him, and that, with such children, he moved upon the premises, and has occupied the same ever since, claiming it as a homestead; that in the year 1901, one of the minor children died, another attained her majority, married and removed to the state of Iowa, and the other son also arrived at his majority and left the home, leaving the father alone in the possession and occupancy of the premises; that the year following, the judgment plaintiff in the court below, who was the administrator of the estate of Orazamus Palmer, deceased, procured a judgment against the plaintiff before a justice of the peace, in Saline county, for \$162.85; that a transcript of

this judgment was duly filed in the office of the clerk of the district court for Saline county, and execution was issued on this judgment, which was levied on the lands in controversy by defendant sheriff, who advertised same for sale. To enjoin this sale, the present action was instituted.

The question to be determined is whether or not plaintiff was entitled to claim this property as his homestead at the time the indebtedness accrued on which judgment was entered. It appears from the facts above stated that, when the action on which the judgment was procured was instituted in the justice's court, plaintiff was living alone upon the lands, with no dependent relatives under his care. It also appears equally clear that, when the lands were purchased, he was the "head of a family" within the meaning of section 15, chapter 36, Compiled Statutes, 1903 (Ann. St. 6214), so that the question to be determined is whether or not a homestead once acquired by the head of a family can be divested by any act other than the voluntary alienation, abandonment or waiver of the right by the party entitled to the exemption. Both sides of this question find strong support in the adjudications of the courts of last resort of the different states, as we shall presently point out. It is well to begin with an examination of our own statute, and the trend of our own opinions which interpret it.

Sections 1 and 2 provide as follows:

Section 1. "A homestead not exceeding in value \$2,000, consisting of the dwelling house in which the claimant resides, and its appurtenances, and the land on which the same is situated, not exceeding 160 acres of land, to be selected by the owner thereof, and not in any incorporated city or village, or instead thereof, at the option of the claimant, a quantity of contiguous land not exceeding two lots within any incorporated city or village shall be exempt from judgment liens and from execution or forced sale, except as in this chapter provided."

Section 2. "If the claimant be married, the homestead

may be selected from the separate property of the husband, or with the consent of the wife from her separate property. When the claimant is not married, but is the head of a family, within the meaning of section fifteen, the homestead may be selected from any of his or her property."

Section 3 provides for the liability of a homestead to sale on debts secured by merchants', laborers', or vendors' liens, or for debts secured by mortgages on the premises, executed either by both husband and wife or by the unmarried claimant.

Section 5 makes provision for setting off exemption when execution is levied on land claimed as a homestead.

Section 15 defines the "head of a family" to include:

"Second. Every person who has residing on the premises with him or her, and under his care and maintenance, either: (1) His or her minor child, or the minor child of his or her deceased wife or husband."

Section 17 contains the following provision:

"If the homestead was selected from the separate property of either husband or wife it vests, on the death of the person from whose property it was selected, in the survivor for life and afterwards in his or her heirs forever, subject to the power of the decedent to dispose of the same except the life estate of the survivor by will. In either case it is not subject to the payment of any debt or liability contracted by or existing against the husband and wife or either of them previous to or at the time of the death of such husband, or wife, except such as exists or has been created under the provisions of this chapter."

It will be noticed that the provisions of these statutes reserve the homestead right to every person who is the head of a family as defined in section 15, whether married or unmarried at the time of the acquisition. When the homestead right is acquired by a married person, it cannot be conveyed or incumbered, unless the instrument by which it is conveyed or incumbered is executed and acknowledged by both husband and wife, under section 4.

This section of the statute, in the case of *Whitlock v. Gosson*, 35 Neb. 829, was declared to make the conveyance of a homestead executed by the husband alone void, not only as to the interest of the wife, but also as to the interest of the husband who executed it. This decision is important in establishing the principle that, when a homestead right is acquired, it can only be divested in the manner prescribed by statute, and on this principle it is supported by a line of decisions of this court cited in the opinion, and has been subsequently followed in *Giles v. Miller*, 36 Neb. 346; *Clarke v. Koenig*, 36 Neb. 572; *Violet v. Rose*, 39 Neb. 660; *Havemeyer v. Dahn*, 48 Neb. 536. If the homestead in controversy had been selected from the lands of the deceased wife, there could be no doubt but that, under the provision of section 17, *supra*, on the death of the wife, the homestead right would have descended to the husband for life, whether any children had been born of the marriage or not. And now the question arises as to whether or not we shall construe this statute as giving a higher right by reason of inheritance from the owner of the homestead than attaches to the owner himself. While this question has never been specifically determined by this court, COBB, J., in rendering the opinion in *Dorrington v. Myers*, 11 Neb. 391, did not hesitate to say how he would have determined the question, if it had been necessary, when he used the following language:

"While placing my views of this case upon the above ground, I by no means wish it understood that the plaintiff's right to homestead exemption depends upon the fact of his ability to provide for his son and daughters-in-law, and to hire servant girls. When as the head of a family he entered into possession of this homestead, he became vested, so to speak, of a homestead estate therein, which was alienable only by sale or abandonment. Neither the death of the wife, nor her abandonment of her husband, nor the arrival at full age and departure from the parental roof of all the sons and daughters, would have the

effect of dismantling the homestead of the protection of the exemption law."

This opinion was rendered under the homestead law of 1867, which has been broadened and extended by the enactment of 1879. The question was subsequently adverted to in the opinion in *Hyde v. Hyde*, 60 Neb. 503, but the decision there turned on another question, and no expression of opinion on the point now in controversy was given.

In *Galligher v. Smiley*, 28 Neb. 189, REESE, C. J., in rendering the opinion, said:

"In its inception a homestead is a parcel of land on which the family resides, and which is to them a home. It is constituted by the two acts of selection and residence, in compliance with the terms of the law conferring it. When these things exist *bona fide*, the essential elements of the homestead right exist, of which the persons entitled to it cannot be divested by acts or influences beyond their volition."

This opinion was rendered in a case in which the family still resided on the original homestead which, when selected, was farm land, but which was subsequently incorporated into the city of Omaha, without the consent of the owner. It was contended that the incorporation of the lands by the ordinance of the city council, extending its area, operated to diminish the area of the homestead to the limits prescribed for a homestead in city and village lots. And in determining the question, the language above quoted was used. While the facts differ from those now in issue, yet the principle announced, that, where a homestead is selected, it cannot be divested by acts or influences beyond the volition of the party claiming it, is clearly in point in the determination of the instant case.

Turning now to the decisions of the courts of last resort in other states on statutes of somewhat similar construction to our own, we find an irreconcilable conflict in the various conclusions reached. This conflict in some instances is traceable to the different provisions of the

statutes construed, and in other instances to the conception taken by the court of the intention of the legislature in the enactment of the statute. Those courts which look upon the statute as a statute of nurture, intended solely for the protection of the dependent members of the family from the improvidence of the head of the family, without any division arrive at the conclusion that, when the homestead has been selected and the dependent members of the family for whose benefit it was created have ceased to occupy, the protection of the homestead ceases, because the reason for the protection has ceased. The leading cases supporting this theory of construction are: *Revalk v. Kraemer*, 8 Cal. 66; *Santa Cruz Bank v. Cooper*, 56 Cal. 339; *Johnson v. Little*, 90 Ga. 781; *Cooper v. Cooper*, 24 Ohio St. 488; *Galligar v. Payne*, 34 La. Ann. 1057; *Hill v. Franklin*, 54 Miss. 632; *Fullerton v. Sherrill*, 114 Ia. 511, 87 N. W. 419. In opposition to this view is another line of decisions based on the hypothesis that the intention of the legislature in enacting the various homestead statutes was to protect the home and *all* its inmates from any business misfortune and financial adversity that might befall them; that the protection extends to the head of the family as well as to the dependent members. This theory leads to the conclusion that, when a homestead has been selected by the head of a family, he becomes invested with a right or estate in such homestead, which cannot be defeated by the death or abandonment of the home by the other members of the family who occupied it at the time of its selection. The following are some of the leading cases supporting this view: *Silloway v. Brown*, 12 Allen (Mass.), 30; *Kimbrel v. Willis*, 97 Ill. 494; *Stanley v. Snyder*, 43 Ark. 429; *Beckmann v. Meyer*, 75 Mo. 333; *Webb v. Cowley*, 5 Lea (Tenn.), 722; *Blum v. Gaines*, 57 Tex. 119; *Stults v. Sale*, 17 S. W. (Ky.) 148.

In the case of *Stults v. Sale*, *supra*, an opinion was rendered under a statute very similar in its provisions to our own, in that it provided for the descent of the homestead

right to the surviving husband or wife upon the death of the one from whose lands the homestead had been selected. In this case the husband owned the land from which the homestead was selected, and was the head of a family consisting of a wife and minor children; but at the time the levy was made, by reason of the death of the wife and the marriage or death of the other members of the family, the claimant occupied the premises alone. In rendering the opinion the court said:

"In this case * * * the property belongs to the husband, who is the debtor and is claiming it as exempt to him as a homestead. Undoubtedly the having of a family was necessary to the creation of the right in him, but is it necessary to the continuance of it? * * * The statute makes no express mention in this respect. We must, therefore, look to its general scope and spirit for guidance, the right being the creature of it. * * * Can it well be supposed that the legislature intended that in the event of the death of the wife owning the homestead, the benefit of it should continue to the husband during his occupancy, although he has no family, and yet that if he be the owner of it, and his wife or children die, or the latter marry and leave him, his right to the exemption ceases? If so, it is a singular state of case; and if so, it is equally true of the wife, where she owns the homestead.

* * * Why should not the original owner have a right equal to the survivor, and why should not the law favor the latter equally at least with the former? Is the party to be worsted because he owns the property? Can any reason be given why the same right should not exist as to his own property as is given to him in his wife's property after her death?"

We have quoted somewhat at length from the decision of the case last cited, because of the similarity of the statute construed to our own, as well as for the cogency of the reasons assigned in support of the conclusions reached. While the case decided (*Stults v. Sale, supra*) differs from the one at bar in that the husband selected

the homestead from lands owned by him while his wife was living, yet the difference in nowise influenced the conclusion reached; for in each case the husband was the head of the family within the meaning of the statute at the time the homestead was selected. In neither case was the right a derivative one. There is no provision in our statute for the determination of the homestead right when once acquired, except by death or voluntary action of the party acquiring it. The statute which provides for a homestead for the head of a family, who is unmarried when the homestead is selected, does not limit the right of its enjoyment to the time during which the premises are occupied by the dependent members of the family jointly with the owner. As the statute does not limit the duration of the homestead right to the time of the dependency of the family on the claimant for support, if we follow the liberal construction accorded to this statute by our own court with a view of upholding its provisions, we can hardly escape the conclusion that, when a homestead is once acquired, the right to the continuous enjoyment of it can only be defeated by the voluntary act of the claimant. In this view of the matter the learned trial judge was fully justified in enjoining the sale of plaintiff's homestead.

We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and LETTON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the above opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

CHAUNCY HAIR ET AL., APPELLANTS, V. IRA DAVENPORT
ET AL., APPELLEES.

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,802.

1. **Homestead:** One who purchases land with the *bona fide* intention of making it his home, and who clearly manifests that intention, so that those dealing with it or with him relating to it are put upon notice, may thus impress it with a homestead character, although because of some intervening obstruction he does not take immediate actual possession thereof, if he occupies it with his family within a reasonable time after the purchase.
2. ———. A person cannot at the same time have two homesteads, nor can he have two places either of which at his election he may claim as his homestead.
3. ———. The head of a family who has a homestead cannot acquire a second homestead until the first has been abandoned or conveyed, or contracted to be conveyed, by an instrument which our statute recognizes as legal and valid for that purpose.

APPEAL from the district court for Colfax county: CONRAD HOLLENBECK, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

George W. Wertz, for appellants.

George H. Thomas, *contra*.

DUFFIE, C.

In 1898 Ira Davenport, in his own right and as executor of the estate of John Davenport, contracted to sell to Albert Busch the northeast quarter of section 5, township 2, range 2, in Colfax county, Nebraska. This contract was assigned by Busch to the defendant Herman Eberhard April 9, 1902. October 17, 1902, Eberhard entered into a contract with Chauncy Hair to sell him the north half of the quarter section, and on the same day made a like contract with Henry Hamann to sell him the south half of the quarter section. This action is to enforce a specific performance of these contracts. Davenport, who had in the meantime become sole owner of the land, was

made a party defendant, and answered, alleging his readiness to deed the premises to whomsoever the court might direct. Eberhard and his wife filed an answer, setting up a claim of homestead in the entire quarter section, and defended the case upon the theory that the premises constituted the homestead of the parties, and that, Mrs. Eberhard not having joined in the contracts of sale, the same were absolutely void. A decree went in favor of the Eberhards, from which the vendees in the contract of sale have taken an appeal.

It is undisputed that on April 9, 1902, when Eberhard took an assignment of his contract of sale from Busch, Eberhard owned and lived with his family on 80 acres of land in Stanton county, some miles distant from the land in controversy. He had lived there for some years, and it undoubtedly constituted his home and homestead. On April 7, 1902, two days prior to taking an assignment from Busch, Eberhard and his wife contracted to sell the 80 acres on which they lived to one Malena, but this contract of sale was not acknowledged. The contract provided that possession should not be given until the following March, when a deed was to be made upon the payment of the full consideration, Malena having paid \$500 at the date of the contract. Eberhard and his wife continued to occupy this farm until the latter part of February, 1903, when they took possession of the Colfax county land in controversy, and were living thereupon when this action was commenced. Eberhard and his wife insist that they purchased the land in controversy for a home, and with the intention of occupying the same as their homestead immediately upon removing from the farm in Stanton county; and the only questions in the case are, first, can a person have two tracts of land, either of which at his election he may claim as his homestead; and, second, whether under the facts in this case the mere intention to occupy land purchased by the head of the family, unaccompanied by any physical act manifesting such intention, gives the premises a homestead character which can be set up as a

defense against the enforcement of a contract for the sale of the premises made by the husband alone.

In *Wright v. Dunning*, 46 Ill. 271, 92 Am. Dec. 257, the court said:

"By our act, a person could not have two homes at the same time, both exempt, nor could he have two, either of which, at his election, would be exempt. The home must be such that it, and it alone, is within the protection of the statute."

Our homestead act (sec. 4, ch. 36, Comp. St. 1903; Ann. St. 6203), provides that "the homestead of a married person cannot be conveyed or incumbered unless the instrument by which it is conveyed or incumbered is executed and acknowledged by both husband and wife." And this provision is held to apply to a contract to convey a homestead. *Larson v. Butts*, 22 Neb. 370. The uniform holding in this state is that any conveyance or incumbrance upon a homestead not signed and acknowledged by both husband and wife is absolutely void. The contract by which Eberhard and his wife agreed to sell their Stanton county home to Malena was not acknowledged. It was therefore void. It could not be enforced. Malena could not enforce a deed, neither could Eberhard specifically enforce the contract against Malena. *Solt v. Anderson*, 63 Neb. 734. Undoubtedly, until their conveyance of this tract of land in 1903, and their removal to the land in controversy in this action, either Eberhard or his wife could assert a homestead claim in the premises, which the courts would be compelled to recognize and uphold.

In *Waggle v. Worthy*, 74 Cal. 266, 5 Am. St. Rep. 440, it was held that a homestead declaration, filed while the claimant has another homestead duly selected and never abandoned, is void. The fact that the first homestead was sold under execution and surrendered to the purchaser is immaterial, because, such sale being void, the homestead right is in no way affected thereby. In the body of the opinion it is said:

"But so far as this record shows, the sale to Jacobs was

of no effect. A homestead is exempt from execution, and if the land was worth more than \$5,000 (which does not appear), the proceedings provided by the code for ad-measuring the excess (Civ. Code, secs. 1245 *et seq.*) should have been taken. This not having been done, the attempted sale was void, the homestead still existed, and was not abandoned by the claimants moving off the premises. In this state, 'a homestead can be abandoned *only* by a declaration of abandonment, or a grant thereof, executed and acknowledged,' etc. (Civ. Code, sec. 1243.) It results that the first homestead was a valid and subsisting homestead at the time the second was attempted to be declared. A party cannot have two homesteads; and if he attempts to acquire a second while the first is in force, the second is void."

Our conclusion is that Eberhard in October, 1902, when the contracts in suit were made, had a homestead right in Stanton county which no one could successfully dispute or question, and, such being the case, he could not at the same time acquire another homestead right in Colfax county, and assert it against the parties seeking to enforce the contracts in suit. The law is undoubtedly settled in this state that one who purchases a tract of land with the *bona fide* intention of making it his home, and takes such active steps as his circumstances will allow toward its occupation, and actually occupies it within a reasonable time, may claim a homestead interest therein from the date of his purchase. *Hanlon v. Pollard*, 17 Neb. 368. Our statute also protects the proceeds arising from the sale of a homestead for six months, and, as a consequence, one may sell his homestead, and hold the money for six months for investment in another home. Undoubtedly, if Eberhard had made such a sale of his home in Stanton county as the statute recognizes and would enforce, he might immediately invest it in another tract of land; and if he in good faith intended to make such tract his home, and did so within a reasonable time, considering his circumstances, the homestead character of such second purchase would

be recognized and protected. While the Eberhards, husband and wife, both testify that the tract in Colfax county was purchased for the purpose of a home, there are many circumstances which tend to throw discredit upon their statements. Eberhard had said that he purchased the land as a speculation. He had listed it for sale, and in October he entered into the contracts with the claimants in the present action. There is no evidence to show that he made any improvements upon the land, or took any steps indicating that he intended to occupy it, or make it his home, unless, perhaps, the planting of some fruit trees may have been done prior to his moving onto the premises, but we cannot ascertain from the record when the fruit trees were planted; and so far as is disclosed by the testimony they may have been planted after he had contracted to sell the premises, or even later than that, after he had moved onto the place. It would be an unsafe rule to adopt to say that secret intentions formed in the mind of the purchaser, without any physical act manifesting such intention, would impress upon a tract of land a homestead character, which would either exempt it from levy under legal process or operate to defeat a sale made to other parties.

We recommend that the decree appealed from be reversed and the cause remanded to the district court for further proceedings not inconsistent with this opinion.

ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the decree appealed from is reversed and the cause remanded to the district court for further proceedings not inconsistent with this opinion.

REVERSED.

FRED N. BURLEIGH V. JOSHUA PALMER.

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,847.

1. **Attorney's Lien: TRUST FUNDS.** An attorney has a lien for his compensation for professional services and for his disbursements upon moneys received by him on his client's behalf in the course of his employment, and this right of lien is not affected by the fact that the client is an executor or trustee and the services were rendered and money received on behalf of the estate.
2. ———: **AGREEMENT: REVIEW.** Where an attorney has filed a lien for professional services rendered in the case, and his client agrees to pay a certain amount in consideration of the release of the lien, and suit is brought upon such agreement, the question of the amount of services performed by the attorney or the terms of the original employment are immaterial, and evidence respecting these matters was properly rejected by the court.

ERROR to the district court for Saline county: **LESLIE G. HURD, JUDGE.** *Affirmed.*

Pope & Brown and S. J. Coonradt, for plaintiff in error.

Joshua Palmer, F. I. Foss and R. D. Brown, contra.

DUFFIE, C.

David B. Burlleigh fell from a sidewalk in the city of Friend, and received injuries from which he died. Fred N. Burlleigh, the executor of his will, brought an action against the city for damages, and employed Palmer, an attorney at law, as associate counsel in the case. Judgment went against the city, and Palmer filed an attorney's lien with the clerk of the district court claiming \$300 for his services. This lien was filed June 21, 1898. In his petition in the district court, Palmer alleged his employment in the case; that he performed services therein to the amount of \$200; that he had been paid \$79.55, and claimed a balance due him of \$120.45. He further alleged that on June 24, 1898, Burlleigh, in consideration of his releasing the lien, agreed to make immediate payment of this bal-

ance; that thereupon he made out and delivered to Burleigh a writing addressed to the clerk of the district court, releasing his lien, whereupon Burleigh collected the amount of the judgment, but has failed and refused to carry out his agreement to pay the balance due him for fees. Judgment went in favor of Palmer for the amount claimed, and Burleigh has taken error to this court.

The plaintiff in error first urges that the plaintiff's petition is insufficient in that it is a suit on *quantum meruit*, and no allegation that plaintiff's services were reasonably worth the amount claimed. If the suit was upon a *quantum meruit*, which we do not think is the case, we are of opinion that the petition was sufficient, the allegation being that he performed services to the amount of \$200, the clear meaning of which is that his services were reasonably worth that sum.

It is further objected that Palmer was not entitled to an attorney's lien on the judgment recovered against the city of Friend and in favor of the estate of David B. Burleigh, as it clearly appears that his employment was made by Fred N. Burleigh, the executor, in his individual capacity. This raises the right of an attorney to claim a lien against a judgment or fund secured by his services, where he was employed by a trustee, as in this case. The question, so far as we are advised, has never been before this court, but there are numerous decisions to the effect that an attorney cannot be deprived of the benefit of his lien because employed in the case by a plaintiff who brings the action in the capacity of a trustee. This precise question was determined by the court of appeals of the state of New York in *In the Matter of the Application of Knapp*, 85 N. Y. 284, and it was there held that "an attorney has a lien for his compensation for professional services, and for disbursements, upon moneys received by him on his client's behalf, in the course of his employment. This right of lien is not affected by the fact that the client is an executor, and the services were rendered, and money received, on behalf of the estate; nor is it confined to

moneys recovered by judgment." The same principle is recognized in *Harrison v. Perca*, 168 U. S. 311. See also *In re Holland Trust Co.*, 76 Hun (N. Y.) 323, 27 N. Y. Supp. 687; *In re King*, 61 N. Y. App. 152, 70 N. Y. Supp. 356; *Lee v. Van Voorhis*, 78 Hun (N. Y.), 575, 29 N. Y. Supp. 571, affirmed by court of appeals, 40 N. E. 164. This disposes of the contention of Burleigh that Palmer was not entitled to a lien, and that therefore his releasing the same was no consideration for Burleigh's promise to pay the remainder of his fee.

It is further urged that Palmer's petition shows that the money was in the hands of the clerk of the court prior to Palmer's filing his lien, and that therefore the lien did not attach, the money being paid into court before notice of the lien came to the adverse party. Counsel for plaintiff in error must have overlooked the second paragraph of the petition, which alleges that, "after the rendition of said judgment, and before the same was paid or discharged, plaintiff caused a lien to be filed according to law with the clerk of the district court wherein said judgment was recorded."

It is also urged that Burleigh's promise being that to pay the debt of another, is void under our statute of frauds. It will be remembered that an executor cannot bind the estate for which he is acting by any contract which he may make. If in the conduct of the business of the estate it becomes necessary to employ an attorney, he may do so, and have a reasonable fee for the services performed allowed him as part of the costs and expense of the administration. The debt however is his own, and he is personally liable to the party employed. If he wishes to protect himself against a greater charge than it is thought the court upon final settlement will allow, he must do so by contracting with the attorney to be satisfied with such fees as the court in charge of the estate thinks reasonable and just, and such as the court will allow the administrator as a reasonable disbursement for the services performed. With this principle in mind, the objections made

that the debt was that of a third party, and to the action of the court in limiting the cross-examination of Palmer, are easily disposed of. On Palmer's cross-examination it was sought to go into the question of his original employment, and the nature of the services actually performed. The court, we think, quite properly limited the evidence to the sole issue in the case, viz., did Burleigh, in consideration of Palmer's releasing his lien against the judgment, agree to pay him the sum of \$120.45, the balance which Palmer claimed to be due? If he did, the contract should be enforced, regardless of what services were performed by Palmer, or of the conditions of his original employment. This was the only question submitted by the court to the jury, and, it being the only question in the case, it is needless to discuss errors assigned upon instructions given, as a careful examination shows that they were a plain statement of the questions, and the only questions, presented by the issues for the determination of the jury.

We discover no error in the record, and recommend an affirmance of the judgment.

ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

CITY OF BEATRICE V. JOHN A. FORBES.

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,853.

1. **Contributory Negligence: BURDEN OF PROOF.** Where negligence is the ground of the action, it rests upon the plaintiff to trace the fault for his injury to the defendant, and for this purpose he must show the circumstances under which the injury occurred, and if from these circumstances as presented by the plaintiff it so clearly appears that the minds of all reasonable men would concur in the conclusion that the fault was mutual, or, in other

City of Beatrice v. Forbes.

words, that contributory negligence must be imputed to the plaintiff, he has by his own evidence disproved his right to recover, and on his own proof he should be nonsuited; but where the proof which he offers in support of his case shows him free from fault, or where it only tends to show contributory negligence on his part, and reasonable men might fairly differ as to the conclusion to be drawn therefrom, then the case should go to the jury, the defendant having the burden to show contributory negligence on the part of the plaintiff, but being entitled in that regard to the benefit of any evidence offered by the plaintiff tending to establish that fact.

2. **Cities: ACTION: NEGLIGENCE.** One using the sidewalks of a city will not be excused from recklessly casting himself upon a known obstruction; yet contributory negligence is not imputable to him as a matter of law from the mere fact that he attempts to pass over a walk that is obstructed or otherwise out of repair, provided the obstruction or other defect is such that a man of ordinary intelligence would reasonably believe that, with proper care and caution, he could pass with safety notwithstanding the defect.

ERROR to the district court for Gage county: WILLIAM H. KELLIGAR, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

M. B. Davis, for plaintiff in error.

Hazlett & Jack and *L. M. Pemberton*, *contra*.

DUFFIE, C.

Sixth street is one of the mainly traveled streets in the city of Beatrice. January 12, 1902, John A. Forbes, the defendant in error, while traveling on said street on his way to church, fell, and received a serious injury, at the place where the sidewalk on the west side of the street crosses an alley. It is alleged in the petition that ice had accumulated where said alley is crossed by the sidewalk, to a depth of six inches or more, and to a width from four to six feet at the place where said alley is crossed by the walk, and a greater width both easterly and westerly from where said alley is crossed by said walk; that water and slush ran down over and stood upon said crossing, and

while in that condition people tramped through said slush and water, and when the same froze there were rough places in the ice where people had walked through slush, and other places where the ice was exceedingly slippery, and on account of said accumulation of ice the crossing was in a dangerous condition. Judgment went in favor of Forbes, and the city has taken error to this court.

The first assignment noticed in the brief of the city relates to the third instruction given by the court, as follows: "If you find from the evidence that the injury to the plaintiff complained of was occasioned by the negligence and want of ordinary care of defendant, you are instructed that the burden of proof is then on the defendant city to satisfy by a preponderance of the evidence that negligence and want of ordinary care on the part of the plaintiff contributed thereto, in order to prevent a recovery in this case." It is said in the brief that "this instruction is palpably wrong; that the plaintiff testified that he saw the ice on this alley crossing before stepping on it, and considered it a dangerous place, but that, with this knowledge present in his mind, he deliberately attempted to walk over the ice at the widest point, which was, under the circumstances, a gross act of negligence, and that therefore the burden of proving negligence on the part of the plaintiff could not be shifted to the defendant city." Before proceeding to consider the objections made to this instruction, we ought to say that the record does not bear out this statement that Forbes said he knew the place to be dangerous. We reproduce what Forbes said regarding it in his own language: "I looked it over carefully, and, having seen other people cross that place, knew it was an icy place and bad place to walk, but thought by careful walking I could get over it, and made the attempt to get over it, but I did not get over it. I fell down and broke my leg." This is far from an admission that Forbes knew that it was dangerous to attempt the crossing. He knew it to be a bad place, but thought that by being careful it might be safely crossed. It is true that

what Forbes may have thought in this respect is not the controlling question in the case. It was a matter for the jury to say whether, under the circumstances, a man of ordinary prudence, having regard for his own safety, would have attempted to make the crossing.

Coming now to the instruction complained of, the law has been settled in this state by the opinions in *Rapp v. Sarpy County*, 71 Neb. 382, 385, that the burden rests upon the defendant, who defends upon the ground of the plaintiff's contributory negligence, of establishing such defense by a preponderance of the testimony, and that the burden does not shift throughout the trial. There were many former opinions by the court to the effect that, if the plaintiff can prove his case without disclosing contributory negligence on his part, then the burden rested upon the defendant to show such negligence, and while but one of the cases so held in terms (*Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Featherly*, 64 Neb. 323), the inference was that, where the plaintiff's testimony tended to show contributory negligence on his part, the burden then shifted to him to show that he was not negligent. The *Featherly* case has been overruled in the *Rapp* case above cited. The law is well settled, not only here, but in every state of the Union, that contributory negligence on the part of a plaintiff which proximately contributes to the injury complained of will defeat his recovery. In some of the states the rule is that, in order to recover, he must show not only the negligence of the defendant, but his own freedom from negligence. The burden rests on him in respect to both these questions, and if he fails in either he cannot recover. In this state the rule has always prevailed that, if he can prove the allegations of his petition showing his injury and the negligence of the defendant as the proximate cause producing it, then the defendant, in order to defeat a recovery on the ground of contributory negligence by the plaintiff, must establish such negligence by a preponderance of the evidence produced on the trial. The true theory under this rule is that, where

negligence is the ground of the action, it rests upon the plaintiff to trace the fault for his injury to the defendant, and for this purpose he must show the circumstances under which the injury occurred, and if from these circumstances as presented by the plaintiff it so clearly appears that the minds of all reasonable men would concur in the conclusion that the fault was mutual, or, in other words, that contributory negligence must be imputed to the plaintiff, he has by his own evidence disproved his right to recover, and on his own proof he should be nonsuited; but where the proof which he offers in support of his case shows him free from fault, or where it only tends to show contributory negligence on his part, and reasonable men might fairly differ as to the conclusion to be drawn therefrom, then the case should go to the jury. If, after the plaintiff has rested, the case is in such condition as to require submission to the jury, and to put the defendant upon proof of his defense of contributory negligence on the part of the plaintiff, then the burden rests on him to prove it by a preponderance of the evidence, but in so doing he is entitled to the benefit of any evidence offered by the plaintiff tending to show that he contributed to his own injury. When the case goes to the jury, the proof of contributory negligence on the part of the plaintiff must be submitted to them, not alone upon the proof offered by the defendant in that behalf, but they must consider also any proof coming from the plaintiff or his witnesses tending to establish that defense.

At the request of the plaintiff in error the court gave the following instruction: "The jury are instructed that as a matter of law if the plaintiff was guilty of any negligence, however slight, which contributed to the injury complained of, he cannot recover." It might perhaps have been better had the court said to the jury in plain terms that, in determining whether the plaintiff below was guilty of contributory negligence, they should take into consideration all the evidence before them upon that question, and that any evidence coming from the plaintiff or

his witnesses in that respect should be considered together with that produced by the defendant. It can hardly be, however, that the jury were misled, as in its fourth instruction the court told them that, in determining the issues in the case, they should take into consideration the whole of the evidence and all the facts and circumstances proved on the trial, giving the several parts of the evidence such weight as they thought it entitled to. It is insisted by the plaintiff in error that the evidence taken as a whole shows that Forbes was guilty of negligence which proximately contributed to his injury; that he knew the condition of the crossing, and voluntarily assumed the risk of attempting to pass it, and that he cannot now insist that the damages sustained should be borne by the city. There are instances where the court as a matter of law would say that the danger attending the performance of an act was so great and manifest that it was negligence to attempt it, and that no recovery could be had for damages sustained in such attempt. Such a case is *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Landauer*, 36 Neb. 640, and this court has followed the rule therein announced in other cases. We do not understand, however, that one on discovering a defect or obstruction in a public street on which he is traveling, or a place therein that might be unsafe, is required to turn back and take some other route to his destination, unless the defect is of such a character as to render it dangerous to the mind of a person of ordinary prudence to attempt the passage, of which the jury are to judge; and especially is this not required where, as in the present case, a large number of people are using the street and passing over the defective way, without injury, to the knowledge of such person. The evidence is conclusive that the crossing was being used by a large number of persons, who passed without accident or injury, and that it was not obviously dangerous to attempt it; but, notwithstanding this, counsel for the city insists in his reply brief that this court should reverse the case upon the theory that as a matter of law the plaintiff was

guilty of contributory negligence. We cannot better dispose of this contention than by quoting the language of Justice White in *Mosheuvel v. District of Columbia*, 191 U. S. 247, in speaking of a similar claim made by counsel for the district in that case. He said:

"When analyzed the proposition comes to this, that no person can, as a matter of law, without assuming all the risk, use the streets of a municipality where he knows of a defect therein, even although it be that in the exercise of a sound judgment, it might be deemed that with ordinary care and prudence the street could be used with safety. The result of admitting the doctrine would be to hold that all persons in making use of the public streets assumed all risks possible to arise from every known defect or danger. * * * Reduced to its last analysis, the principle contended for but asserts that the ordinary rules by which negligence is to be determined do not apply to the use of the public streets, since those who use such streets with a knowledge of a possible danger to arise from a defect therein must, as a matter of law, have negligence imputed to them, although in choosing to make use of the streets and in the mode of use the fullest possible degree of judgment and care was exercised. The result of this would be to relieve the municipality of all duty and consequent responsibility concerning defects in highways, provided only it chose to give notice of the existence of the defects."

He then cites and quotes from a large number of cases going to establish the rule that a person who in the lawful use of the highway meets with an obstruction may yet proceed, if it is consistent with reasonable care to do so, and that this is generally a question for the jury, depending upon the nature of the obstruction and all the circumstances surrounding the party. We think that a majority, and the better reasoned cases, establish the rule that while a traveler will not be excused in recklessly casting himself upon a known obstruction, yet contributory negligence is not imputed to him as a matter of law

from the mere fact that he attempts to pass over a street that is obstructed or out of repair, provided the obstruction or other defect is such that a man of ordinary intelligence would reasonably believe that with proper care and caution he could pass with safety notwithstanding such defect.

Other errors are assigned on some of the instructions given, and on the refusal of the court to give instructions asked by the city. It would serve no useful purpose to discuss them in detail. What we have already said covers the principal questions argued in dispute between the parties. The instructions given by the court contain a correct definition of the law applicable to the case, and cover the whole case; of those refused some were embodied in principle by those given, and others were not warranted by the evidence. Finding no reversible error in the record, we recommend an affirmance of the judgment.

ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

CHRISTOPHER B. E. STROEMER V. JOSIAH A. VAN ORSDEL.*

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,800.

1. **Attorney and Client: CONTRACT: VALIDITY.** A contract between an attorney and client for services to be rendered by the former is not necessarily invalid because a part of the services to be rendered is the procurement of legislative action, nor because such contract provides for a contingent fee. *Richardson v. Scott's Bluff County*, 59 Neb. 400, modified.
2. **Contract: VALIDITY.** Such contract will be enforced, unless it appears that it contemplates the use of unlawful or improper means, or that such means were employed in pursuance thereof to attain the object for which the contract was made.

*Rehearing allowed. See opinion, p. 143, *post*.

2. —: PUBLIC POLICY. While public policy forbids the enforcement of an illegal or immoral contract, it is equally insistent on the enforcement of contracts which are lawful and contravene none of its rules.

ERROR to the district court for Gage county: ALBERT H. BABCOCK, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

L. M. Pemberton, for plaintiff in error.

Samuel Rinaker, Robert S. Bibb and Hazlett & Jack, contra.

ALBERT, C.

We shall use the terms plaintiff and defendant with reference to the title of the cause in the district court.

The plaintiff alleges that he entered into an oral contract with the defendant, whereby he was employed by the defendant as his agent and attorney to take such action and render such services in the way of collecting facts, preparing and submitting to the Indians and the proper authorities of the federal government arguments on the merits of the claims of those holding lands purchased under the act of congress approved March 3, 1881, providing for the sale of the remainder of the reservation of the confederate Otoe and Missouri tribes of Indians in the states of Nebraska and Kansas, as in the judgment of plaintiff might be necessary and proper to secure from the federal government and said Indians a reduction in the amount which, under the laws of the United States as they then stood, it was necessary to pay to satisfy the unpaid balance due the government by the defendant and other purchasers under said act; that for said services the defendant undertook and agreed to pay the plaintiff a sum equal to ten per cent. of whatever such reduction might be obtained. Among other allegations in the petition, of acts done and services performed by the plaintiff in pursuance of said contract, is the following: "That

thereafter the plaintiff went to Washington city, District of Columbia, and went before the secretary of the department of the interior, and there presented the interests and claims of the defendant and other purchasers of lands under the said act of congress for a rebate and reduction in the amounts still owing to the government for the said lands. And plaintiff urged upon the secretary of the department of the interior his approval of the consent of said Indians to the said rebate and reduction made by the said Indians, as aforesaid, that, as a result of the plaintiff's presentation of the matter aforesaid to the said secretary, the said secretary prepared a bill for an act of congress, and recommended the passage of the same by congress, which said bill was for an act approving and ratifying the said action of the said Indians in consenting to the reduction aforesaid, and authorizing the said secretary to accept payment for said lands in accordance with the reduced terms consented to by the said Indians as aforesaid; that the plaintiff appeared before the committee of the senate of the United States on Indian affairs, and also before a similar committee of the house of representatives, and there again presented the interests of the defendant and other purchasers of lands sold under the said act of congress hereinbefore first mentioned, and urged the claims of the defendant and other purchasers of said lands for a reduction in and a rebate of the amounts due to the government for the lands purchased as aforesaid; that as a result of plaintiff's efforts and services as aforesaid, favorable reports were made by the said committees to their respective bodies upon the said bill, and the same was duly enacted by the congress of the United States, and approved by the president thereof, and became a law of the United States, April 4, 1900, and thereafter and pursuant to said law the government of the United States accepted from the defendant in full payment for the land occupied by him, as hereinbefore stated, the reduced amount hereinbefore alleged." It is further alleged that, by reason of said services performed by the

plaintiff in pursuance of said contract, he obtained for the defendant a reduction of \$2,307.83, and that, by reason of the premises, there is now due and owing to the plaintiff from the defendant on said contract the sum of \$230.78. There were a verdict and judgment for the plaintiff, and the defendant brings error.

The principal contention of the defendant is that the contract is illegal and contrary to public policy, in that it was a contract to pay a contingent fee for influencing legislation. In order to understand this contention, it is necessary to refer to some of the circumstances which gave rise to the contract, and what was done by plaintiff in pursuance of it. By the provisions of the act of March 3, 1881, above referred to, with the consent of the Otoe and Missouri tribes of Indians, expressed in open council, the secretary of the interior was authorized to survey and to sell the lands of those Indians lying in Nebraska and Kansas. After being surveyed, the lands were to be appraised by three commissioners, of whom one was to be selected by the Indians and two by the secretary of the interior. After such survey and appraisal, the secretary of the interior was authorized to offer it for sale through the land office at Beatrice, in tracts not exceeding 160 acres, to actual settlers or purchasers, who should make oath before the register or receiver at the land office that they intended to occupy the land for authority to purchase which they made application, and who should, within three months after such application, make a permanent settlement upon the same. These sales were to be for cash, or one-fourth in cash to become payable at the expiration of three months from the date of filing the application, one-fourth in one year, one-fourth in two years, and one-fourth in three years from the date of sale. No land was to be sold for less than the appraised value thereof, and in no case for less than \$2.50 an acre. There was no provision in the act that the land should be sold at public auction. It was similar to a former act of congress for the sale of a portion of the same Indian reservation,

in pursuance of which the lands had been sold at private sale; and the settlers proceeded on the theory that the sales under the subsequent act would be conducted in the same manner as those under the former act. But, for some reason, the officer charged with the sale of the land put it up for sale at auction to the highest bidder. That his action in this respect was unauthorized, and a hardship was thereby entailed on the settlers and purchasers, is shown by a report made by the committee on Indian affairs to congress, from which we take the following:

"In the total disregard not only of the spirit and letter of the law, but the official assurances * * * after the survey and appraisement of the lands had been completed, to the complete surprise of the intending settlers, the general land office issued an order for a public sale."

"And the tracts were awarded to the highest bidders therefor at prices greatly in excess of the appraised value."

That "the sale was controlled by a mob of disorderly, intoxicated and irresponsible persons; and the intending settlers seeking to secure lands of their selection, and on which they had previously made settlement in accordance with the spirit and purpose of the law, were brought into unfair competition and serious menace from the mob which had gathered for the purpose of speculation and making trouble, and not for the purpose of making actual settlement of the lands through *bona fide* purchase."

"The commissioner of the general land office was present at the sale, endeavored as best he could to protect the *bona fide* intending settlers, and assured them, in his official capacity, that no advantage would be taken of the excessive bidding, and that in the end the government would make a fair and reasonable adjustment, and exact no more from the purchasers than the real and appraised value of said lands. The settlers relied upon these assurances, made the bids necessary to secure the lands, and entered upon them." See report No. 2,198, 55th congress, 3d session, house committee on Indian affairs.

After the sales, the settlers made some efforts to obtain

relief from what was deemed the injustice resulting to them by a sale of the land at public auction instead of at private sale. The merits of their claims were recognized by both the department of the interior and by congress, and on the 3d day of March, 1893, an act of congress went into effect, authorizing and directing the secretary of the interior "to revise and adjust, on principles of equity, the sales of lands in the late reservation of the confederate Otoe and Missouri tribes of Indians in the states of Nebraska and Kansas, * * * and in his discretion, the consent of the Indians first being obtained, * * * to allow to the purchasers of said lands * * * rebates on the amounts respectively paid or agreed to be paid by said purchasers." This act also provides that the rebates allowed should not bring the price to be paid for the lands below its appraised value. It was after this act went into effect that the contract sought to be enforced in this action was made. At the time the contract was made, it was generally understood, and we think properly, that no further legislation was required to enable the settlers to obtain a proper reduction from the amount which they had respectively agreed to pay for the lands. After the contract was made, the plaintiff, acting on behalf of the defendant and other settlers, negotiated an agreement with the Indians, whereby they consented that certain reductions might be made to the settlers. This agreement was submitted to the secretary of the interior by the plaintiff for his approval and enforcement, under and in accordance with the act of congress approved March 3, 1893. The matter was set for hearing, but, before the time for hearing arrived, the plaintiff was taken ill, and was confined to his bed by illness for more than two months. During his illness, the secretary of the interior came to the conclusion that there was some doubt as to his authority to proceed under the authority of the act of March 3, 1893, and prepared and submitted to congress, with his recommendation that it become a law, a bill for an act approving the settlement which the plaintiff had nego-

what Forbes may have thought in this respect is not the controlling question in the case. It was a matter for the jury to say whether, under the circumstances, a man of ordinary prudence, having regard for his own safety, would have attempted to make the crossing.

Coming now to the instruction complained of, the law has been settled in this state by the opinions in *Rapp v. Sarpy County*, 71 Neb. 382, 385, that the burden rests upon the defendant, who defends upon the ground of the plaintiff's contributory negligence, of establishing such defense by a preponderance of the testimony, and that the burden does not shift throughout the trial. There were many former opinions by the court to the effect that, if the plaintiff can prove his case without disclosing contributory negligence on his part, then the burden rested upon the defendant to show such negligence, and while but one of the cases so held in terms (*Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Featherly*, 64 Neb. 323), the inference was that, where the plaintiff's testimony tended to show contributory negligence on his part, the burden then shifted to him to show that he was not negligent. The *Featherly* case has been overruled in the *Rapp* case above cited. The law is well settled, not only here, but in every state of the Union, that contributory negligence on the part of a plaintiff which proximately contributes to the injury complained of will defeat his recovery. In some of the states the rule is that, in order to recover, he must show not only the negligence of the defendant, but his own freedom from negligence. The burden rests on him in respect to both these questions, and if he fails in either he cannot recover. In this state the rule has always prevailed that, if he can prove the allegations of his petition showing his injury and the negligence of the defendant as the proximate cause producing it, then the defendant, in order to defeat a recovery on the ground of contributory negligence by the plaintiff, must establish such negligence by a preponderance of the evidence produced on the trial. The true theory under this rule is that, where

negligence is the ground of the action, it rests upon the plaintiff to trace the fault for his injury to the defendant, and for this purpose he must show the circumstances under which the injury occurred, and if from these circumstances as presented by the plaintiff it so clearly appears that the minds of all reasonable men would concur in the conclusion that the fault was mutual, or, in other words, that contributory negligence must be imputed to the plaintiff, he has by his own evidence disproved his right to recover, and on his own proof he should be nonsuited; but where the proof which he offers in support of his case shows him free from fault, or where it only tends to show contributory negligence on his part, and reasonable men might fairly differ as to the conclusion to be drawn therefrom, then the case should go to the jury. If, after the plaintiff has rested, the case is in such condition as to require submission to the jury, and to put the defendant upon proof of his defense of contributory negligence on the part of the plaintiff, then the burden rests on him to prove it by a preponderance of the evidence, but in so doing he is entitled to the benefit of any evidence offered by the plaintiff tending to show that he contributed to his own injury. When the case goes to the jury, the proof of contributory negligence on the part of the plaintiff must be submitted to them, not alone upon the proof offered by the defendant in that behalf, but they must consider also any proof coming from the plaintiff or his witnesses tending to establish that defense.

At the request of the plaintiff in error the court gave the following instruction: "The jury are instructed that as a matter of law if the plaintiff was guilty of any negligence, however slight, which contributed to the injury complained of, he cannot recover." It might perhaps have been better had the court said to the jury in plain terms that, in determining whether the plaintiff below was guilty of contributory negligence, they should take into consideration all the evidence before them upon that question, and that any evidence coming from the plaintiff or

Child, supra, above set out, has been frequently recognized by the supreme court of the United States and by state courts of last resort. *Wright v. Tebbitts*, 91 U. S. 252; *Meguire v. Coricine*, 101 U. S. 108; *Oscanyan v. Arms Co.*, 103 U. S. 261; *McBratney v. Chandler*, 22 Kan. 692; *Sedgwick v. Stanton*, 14 N. Y. 289; *Bremesen v. Engler*, 49 N. Y. Super. Ct. 172; *Foltz v. Cogswell*, 86 Cal. 542, 25 Pac. 60; *Moyer v. Cantieny*, 41 Minn. 242; *Denison v. Crawford County*, 48 Ia., 211. The case last cited, owing to its similarity to the case at bar, deserves more than passing notice. There a contract had been entered into between the plaintiff and the defendant county, providing that the plaintiff should make application to the federal government for certain swamp lands, or indemnity therefor, which the county claimed it was entitled to receive, and Denison was to receive for his compensation one-half of what he thus procured. To effect the object of the contract required an act of congress. The county received the indemnity contemplated by the contract, and the plaintiff brought suit for his fee under the contract. The contract was upheld by the court in an opinion, which states the rule applicable to such cases in substantially the same language as that used in *Trist v. Child, supra*. In most, if not all, of the cases cited, however, the courts add this qualification: That if the agent or attorney conceals from the members of the legislative body the capacity in which he is acting, or appears to be other than he actually is, legislation procured thereby may be said to have been obtained by improper means, and a contract to pay a compensation therefor is void as against public policy. In the present case the plaintiff is an attorney at law, and made no attempt to conceal the capacity in which he was acting, or to be other than what he actually was. Hence, the case does not fall within that qualification.

It has been held in some cases that where the fee is contingent, as in this case, there is a strong temptation on the part of the agent or attorney to make use of improper means to effect the desired end, and for that reason a con-

tract to render services before an executive officer of the government, or, a legislative body, for a contingent fee is contrary to public policy. In the *Richardson* case, *supra*, considerable stress is laid on this feature of the contract. We do not share the view that such feature of the contract renders it void as against public policy. If the temptation to resort to improper methods is too strong for an attorney, working for a mere fraction of the benefits resulting from his services, it would certainly be far stronger to the real party in interest working in his own behalf and for the whole of the benefits, yet no one questions the right of the party to act in his own behalf in such matters. It would seem to us that to the extent that a contingent fee increases the temptation to the agent or attorney, it diminishes the temptation to the client, so that the sum total of the temptation to employ improper means is unaffected by the character of the fee. Besides, the right of an attorney at law to render services in court for a contingent fee is almost universally recognized in this country. The temptation to resort to improper means before the judiciary is just as strong as it is to resort to such means before the legislative or executive branch of the government, and we have no right to assume that such means would be any more effective in one department than in another. The supreme court of the United States has held more than once, that a contract between an attorney and client is not rendered invalid by a provision for a contingent fee. In *Taylor v. Bemis*, 110 U. S. 42, passing upon the validity of such contract, the court said:

"It was decided in the case of *Stanton v. Embrey*, 93 U. S. 548, 23 L. ed. 983, that contracts by attorneys for compensation in prosecuting claims against the United States were not void because the amount of it was made contingent upon success, or upon the sum recovered. And the well known difficulties and delays in obtaining payment of just claims, which are not within the ordinary course of procedure of the auditing officers of the government, justify a liberal compensation in successful cases,

where none is to be received in case of failure. Any other rule would work much hardship in cases of creditors of small means residing far from the seat of government, who can give neither money nor personal attention to securing their rights."

A contract, whereby an attorney undertakes to procure a pardon for one convicted of crime is not invalid because the compensation is made contingent on success. *Moyer v. Cantieny, supra*. On the validity of such contracts generally see, also, *Wright v. Tebbitts*, and *Denison v. Crawford County, supra*. *Wylic v. Cox*, 15 How. (U. S.) 415; *Barber Asphalt Paving Co. v. Botsford*, 56 Kan. 532, 44 Pac. 3; *Aultman v. Waddle*, 40 Kan. 195; *Sedgwick v. Stanton, supra*; *Hunt v. Test*, 8 Ala. 713, 42 Am. Dec. 659; *Beal v. Polhemus*, 67 Mich. 130; *Wilcey v. Collier*, 7 Md. 273, 61 Am. Dec. 346.

In the light of the authorities cited, we are unable to see wherein the contract in suit contravenes any rule of public policy either as to the nature of the services contemplated by the parties when the contract was made, or those rendered in pursuance of it. It is not sufficient to say that the plaintiff might have resorted to illegal or improper means to attain the end contemplated by the contract; that might be said in any case. But the public interest is not well served by indulging baseless suspicions of wrongdoing. While public policy forbids the enforcement of an illegal or immoral contract, it is equally inconsistent that those which are lawful and contravene none of its rules be duly enforced, and not set at naught or held invalid on a bare suspicion of illegality. Had the defendant done for himself all that is shown the plaintiff did for him in pursuance of the contract, it would have been what is everywhere recognized as a legitimate exercise of his rights as a citizen. If it were competent for the defendant to do those things in his own behalf, we are unable to see why the services of one employed to act for him should be held illegal or contrary to public policy.

Complaint is made of some of the instructions, but such

complaint appears to be disposed of in what has already been said.

It is recommended that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

The following opinion on rehearing was filed March 8, 1906. *Judgment of affirmance adhered to:*

1. **Attorney and Client: CONTRACT: VALIDITY.** An agreement for purely professional services, such as "collecting facts, preparing and submitting to the Indians and proper authorities of the government of the United States arguments upon the merits of the claims of those holding Indian lands purchased from the government for a reduction, and upon the justice and advisability of a reduction, of the purchase price of such lands, as may be necessary and proper to secure such reduction," is valid.
2. **Contract: PUBLIC POLICY.** The fact that the agent or attorney in carrying out his agreement, and as incidental thereto, appears before a committee of both houses of congress and explains the nature of a bill prepared by the secretary of the interior, authorizing him to grant the reduction of the price of such lands agreed upon, does not render such contract void, or preclude the attorney from recovering the compensation expressed therein for his services. *Trist v. Child*, 21 Wall. (U. S.) 441.
3. Former opinion herein, *ante*, p. 132, modified and adhered to.

BARNES, J.

Our original opinion in this case, *ante*, p. 132, affirms the judgment of the trial court, and holds that the contract on which this action was based is valid and enforceable. A rehearing has been allowed; the case has been presented to the court by oral argument and on printed briefs, and the question now is shall we adhere to that opinion. It is stated therein: The contract in question, as construed by the plaintiff in the court below, is clearly

within the rule announced in the case of *Richardson v. Scott's Bluff County*, 59 Neb. 400. Using that expression as a foundation for his contention, counsel for the defendant now strenuously insists that our decision is wrong; that it should be set aside, and the judgment of the trial court reversed, because the contract is one to secure legislation, in other words, is a lobbying contract, and void as against public policy. We are convinced, however, that the statement above is incorrect, and is not fully justified by the record. The contract in question, set forth in the petition of the plaintiff in the court below, is as follows:

"The plaintiff and the defendant entered into an oral agreement, whereby the defendant employed the plaintiff to act for the defendant as his attorney and agent to take such action and render such services in the way of collecting facts, preparing and submitting to the Indians and proper authorities of the government of the United States arguments upon the merits of the claims of those holding lands purchased from the government, as aforesaid, for a reduction, and upon the justice and advisability of such reduction to and for all concerned as in the judgment of the plaintiff might be necessary and proper to secure from the government of the United States, and the said Indians, a rebate or reduction in the amount which, under the laws of the United States as they then stood, it was necessary to pay to the government of the United States to satisfy and extinguish the unpaid balance due the government of the United States for the said land under the terms of the said sale to the said defendant; that as a part of said agreement, and to induce the plaintiff to undertake the task of securing a reduction of, or rebate upon, the payment required to be made, as aforesaid, for the said land to the government of the United States, the defendant at said time orally agreed with, and promised to the plaintiff to pay to the plaintiff a sum of money equal to ten per cent. of the reduction or rebate which the plaintiff might secure of or upon the amount due the government as aforesaid, and the plaintiff at said time, as a part of said agree-

ment, orally promised and agreed to and with the defendant to undertake to secure a rebate upon or reduction of the amount remaining to be paid to the government for the said land as aforesaid; that it was further at the said time orally agreed by and between the plaintiff and the defendant that the sum of money to be paid by the defendant to plaintiff, as aforesaid, should be due and payable from the defendant to the plaintiff as soon as the said reduction or rebate was secured, and the government of the United States accepted the reduced amount in full payment for said land."

It is apparent from reading the contract that it is valid on its face, and one that the parties had a right to make. It contains no agreement, in terms, to procure legislative action, and it is quite clear from the record that no such action was considered necessary, or was in any way contemplated, by the parties thereto at the time it was made. It appears that, after the plaintiff below had obtained the consent of the Indians to a reduction of the price of their lands, as contemplated by the agreement, and when such consent was presented by the plaintiff to the secretary of the interior for his approval, that officer was also of opinion that he had the power to make the necessary orders to close up the transaction, under the authority of the act of congress of March 3, 1893, referred to in our former opinion; and it would seem that, when the secretary had approved of the reduction sought by the plaintiff, and agreed to by the Indians, the plaintiff had performed, as far as he could, the services contemplated by the parties when the contract was made. That such an agreement was perfectly legitimate, and the services thus performed were proper, there can be no doubt. It is shown that it was the secretary of the interior that originated the idea that additional legislation should be had, giving him further power, before making his final order approving of the agreement of the parties and granting the rebate in question. He therefore, on his own motion, and without suggestion of the plaintiff, prepared a bill for that purpose,

and had it submitted to congress. So it may be said that when, as stated in the contract, it was agreed that the plaintiff should take such action and render such services as in his judgment might be necessary and proper to secure such rebate from the government and the said Indians, it was not within the mind of either of the parties that legislative action would be required, and services of that kind were not intended to be contracted for.

In *Richardson v. Scott's Bluff County*, *supra*, the contract was: "To draft a bill, have it introduced in the legislature, explain it to and make arguments in its favor before committees of the legislature, and do all things needful and proper to secure its passage; such party to receive no compensation unless the passage of the bill, an appropriation act, is procured—if successful, the fees not fixed, but to be liberal." By a comparison of the contracts it clearly appears that they are not in the same class; that one is a legitimate contract for professional services, where legislative action is not contemplated or contracted for, while the other is an agreement to procure legislative action, to wit, the passage of an appropriation bill, by drafting the bill itself, having it introduced in the legislature, and doing all things necessary, including lobbying, to procure its passage. That such an agreement is a lobbying contract, is against public policy, and falls within the rule announced by the courts in the cases relied on by counsel for the defendant, there can be no doubt.

In order to dispose of the whole question, it only remains for us to consider the nature of the services performed by the plaintiff in carrying out his part of the agreement. It is insisted by counsel for the defendant that such services were illegal, opposed to considerations of public policy, and were void; that plaintiff cannot recover for such services, and by their performance the contract is brought within the rule last above stated. We are unable to give our assent to this view of the matter. It appears that the services performed by the plaintiff up to and including the time when he had secured the ap-

proval of the secretary of the interior to the agreement of the Indians granting a rebate or reduction of the price of the land in question were strictly legitimate and proper, and were such professional services as were evidently contemplated by the contract. It further appears that it was the secretary of the interior who first suggested a desire on his part for additional legislative authority before completing the transaction. The plaintiff did not frame the bill which was presented to congress, it was drawn by the secretary of the interior, who also procured it to be introduced before both houses of congress. It appears, however, that thereafter the plaintiff was called, or at least appeared, before a committee of each house, and explained the nature of the bill, and informed them of its purpose and effect. This service he performed in a proper manner, and it is not shown that he influenced, or attempted to influence, any member of congress in order to secure the passage of the bill. The services thus performed by the plaintiff, it would seem, were purely professional in their nature, and fall within the rule announced in *Trist v. Child*, 21 Wall. (U. S.) 441. They are within the category of preparing and presenting arguments, and submitting them to a legislative committee or other proper authority. And if the contract contained an express agreement to perform such services for a contingent fee, such agreement would not render it void. So we are of opinion that the conclusion announced by our former decision is right, but that the expression that the contract herein falls fully within the case of *Richardson v. Scott's Bluff County* should be, and it is hereby, disapproved. We are satisfied, however, with our modification of the rule in that case, and again give it our approval.

For the foregoing reasons, our former opinion is adhered to.

AFFIRMED.

IDA F. BOETTCHER, EXECUTRIX, ET AL. V. LANCASTER
COUNTY.

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,823.

1. **Clerks of Courts: FEES.** Before the act amendatory of section 3, chapter 28, Compiled Statutes, 1903, limiting the salary of clerks of the district court went into effect, a clerk had collected the fees for making complete records, but died before such records were made. At the request of his representatives, and after said act went into effect, his successor made up these records and received the fees therefor from such representatives. In an action by the county on the official bond of such successor, *held*, that he was properly chargeable with such fees.
2. ———: ———. Under said amendatory act, a clerk of the district court is required to account for the fees earned by him as a member of the board of commissioners of insanity.
3. ———: ———. Ordinarily, under said amendatory act, the clerk extends credit at his peril, and will be required to account for the fees earned by him for official services, whether the same are collected or not.
4. ———: ———. But the clerk is not required to account to the county for fees collected by him for services rendered by his predecessor before said act went into effect, although the act was in force when such fees were collected.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: ALBERT J. CORNISH, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

F. A. Boehmer and Kennedy & Learned, for plaintiffs in error.

James L. Caldwell, contra.

ALBERT, C.

This is an action on the official bond of Charles O. Boettcher, ex-clerk of the district court for Lancaster county. He was appointed to that office on the 14th day of September, 1899, to fill a vacancy caused by the death of Joseph H. Mallalieu, and held until the 4th day of January, 1900, when he surrendered it to his successor, who

had been elected at the preceding general election. The acts and omissions relied upon to show a breach of the conditions of the bond are, in substance, that Boettcher failed to account for the fees of said office as required by the provisions of section 3, chapter 28, Compiled Statutes, 1903 (Ann. St. 9029), which, so far as is material to the present controversy, are as follows: "If the fees of said clerk shall exceed sixteen hundred (\$1,600) dollars per annum in counties having less than twenty-five thousand inhabitants, or if the fees shall exceed three thousand (\$3,000) dollars per annum in counties having more than twenty-five thousand inhabitants and less than fifty thousand inhabitants, or if the fees shall exceed thirty-five hundred (\$3,500) dollars per annum in counties having more than fifty thousand inhabitants and less than one hundred thousand inhabitants, or if the fees shall exceed five thousand (\$5,000) dollars per annum in counties having more than one hundred thousand inhabitants, said clerk shall pay such excess into the treasury of the county in which he holds his office. Provided also, that the clerk of the district court of each county shall on the first Tuesday of January, April, July, and October of each year make a report to the board of county commissioners under oath showing the different items of fees received, from whom, at what time, and for what service, and the total amount of fees received by such officer since the last report, and also the amount received for the current year. Provided further, that if the county board of commissioners think necessary, said clerk may be allowed one deputy at a compensation not to exceed one-half that allowed his principal; and such other assistants at such a compensation and for such time as aforesaid board may allow, and that none of said clerks, deputies or assistants shall receive any other compensation than that accruing to their office." Judgment was given for the plaintiff and the defendants bring error.

In order to understand what follows, it should be kept in mind that the statutory provision above quoted is

amendatory of an act whereby the clerk was not required to account to the county for the fees earned by him, but was permitted to retain them, regardless of their aggregate amount, as his compensation for his official services. The amendatory act was passed without an emergency clause, and was approved April 3, 1899.

Among other items included in the judgment of the district court are fees, aggregating \$1,150.94, for making up complete records which, in the due and orderly conduct of the clerk's office, should have been made up by Boettcher's predecessor, who had collected the fees therefor, but failed to do the work. Boettcher, during his incumbency, did this work, at the request of the representatives of his predecessor, and received therefor from them the amount of fees just mentioned. The defendants now contend that the court erroneously charged Boettcher with the fees he received for making up such records. In support of this contention, it is argued that it was no part of Boettcher's official duty to make up records, which should have been made up by his predecessor in the discharge of his duties, and that whatever fees Boettcher received for such services are for services rendered in his private capacity, and not in his capacity as clerk of the district court. Counsel in their brief say: The test is whether Boettcher, without receiving extra compensation therefor, would have been compelled by proper procedure to make up these records which should have been made up by his predecessor. That is not the test. Section 31, chapter 28, Compiled Statutes, 1903 (Ann. St. 9057), provides that a clerk of the district court, and other officers therein mentioned, may in all cases require the party for whom any service is to be rendered to pay the fees in advance, or give security. From this provision it seems clear that the test is not whether he could have been compelled, without compensation, to make up these records, but whether, upon the payment of his fees therefor, which was done in this case, he could have been compelled by proper procedure to perform such services. Section 444 of the code requires

the clerk to make a complete record of every case determined; section 445 provides that these records shall be made up in the vacation next after the determination of the cause. The statute fixing the time within which such records shall be made must be regarded as directory, because it not infrequently happens that, because of the shortness of the vacation, or other reasons, it is impossible for the clerk to make up a complete record of each case determined at the preceding term. But the duty of making such record, like the other duties of the office, is a continuing one that devolves upon each successive incumbent. It is one that belongs exclusively to the clerk of the district court. No such thing as a complete record of a cause made by a private party, under a contract, is known to the code. The duty of making such record is one that the clerk is required to perform at the request of any person interested, on receipt of his fee, and the fact that such duty should have been performed by a predecessor would be no ground for a denial of such request by the incumbent, nor would it make the services performed by him in that behalf any the less official. The services were performed by Boettcher during his incumbency. He was paid therefor by the representatives of his predecessor. The fees he received for such services are a part of the receipts of his office, and are clearly within the amendatory statute requiring him to account for all fees in excess of the salary thereby allowed.

The trial court charged the defendants with the fees received by Boettcher during his incumbency for his services as a member of the board of insanity, amounting to \$66.30, and the defendants now challenge this charge. Section 17, chapter 40, Compiled Statutes, 1903 (Ann. St. 9606), provides for the organization of a board of insanity in each county, and that the clerk of the district court shall be *ex officio* a member thereof. A subsequent section fixes the compensation of members of this board. This act was in force long before the amendatory act regulating fees of the clerk of the district court, and requiring him to

account therefor, was enacted. The obvious purpose of the amendatory act is to require the clerk to account to the county for the income of his office over and above a certain sum. He is required to account for fees received for official services rendered by virtue of his office. His services as a member of the board of insanity are rendered, and the fees for such services are received by him, by virtue of his office as clerk. *State v. Whittemore*, 12 Neb. 252, seems to be in point. In that case it was sought to compel a county clerk to make a report of all fees received by him by virtue of his office. The county of which he was clerk contained, at that time, less than 8,000 inhabitants, and he was therefore also *ex officio* clerk of the district court. The question arose whether he could be required to account, as county clerk, for the fees received by him as clerk of the district court. The court held that he must account for such fees. The county clerk, in certain counties, is *ex officio* register of deeds, yet it has never been seriously questioned that the law requiring such clerk to account for the fees of his office required him to account for the fees received as register of deeds. We think the defendants were properly charged with the fees received for services rendered as a member of the board of insanity.

It appears from the record that at the expiration of his term fees amounting to \$1,344.25, which Boettcher had earned during his incumbency, were uncollected, and the question now arises whether the defendants are chargeable with such fees. The amendatory statute requiring a clerk to account for the fees of his office over and above a specified salary gives the county a pecuniary interest in the services of the clerk and the earnings of his office. To the extent of that interest, he is the agent of the county and is without authority to extend credit. On the contrary, as we have heretofore seen, he has a right to demand his fees in advance, and since the enactment of the amendment giving the county a pecuniary interest in the income of the clerk's office, it is not only the right of the clerk,

but his duty, to require payment or security in advance of the rendition of his official services. It would be an anomalous holding which would permit one acting with respect to the same subject matter, in his own behalf and as agent for another, to deal more generously with himself than with his principal.

The rule laid down in *Sheibley v. Dixon County*, 61 Neb. 409, is that a county clerk must account for all fees earned by him, whether collected or not. The controversy in that case arose from an item for which the clerk had made no charge. It was contended on behalf of the clerk that, having received no fee for the services, he should not be called upon to account for the same. The court in disposing of that contention said: "This is hardly a tenable position. The law cast upon him the duty of collecting this fee, and if he did not do so, the fault was with him, and he should be compelled to account for the same." There is no great difference in principle between making no charge for services and extending credit therefor whereby the fees are lost. We are clearly of the opinion that it was the duty of Boettcher to collect these fees, and to the extent that he failed to do so, he and his sureties are liable on his official bond. Whether special circumstances might excuse a clerk for a failure to collect his fees is a question which does not arise in this case.

It appears that some of these fees were collected by Boettcher after his term of office had expired. The question is raised whether his sureties are liable for the fees thus collected by him. But the view we have taken with respect to the collection of fees renders it unnecessary to discuss this proposition because, if they were liable for all the fees uncollected at the expiration of his term of office, their liability should not be affected by the fact that he afterwards collected some of these fees.

Another item with which defendants claim they are not properly chargeable is made up of certain fees earned by Boettcher's predecessor before the amendatory act regulating the salary of clerks of the district court took effect,

and which were collected by Boettcher. We agree with the defendants in their contention that Boettcher is not required to account to the county for these fees. While it is true they were received by him during his incumbency, yet, by the provisions of the statute under which they were earned, they belong exclusively to his predecessor, and the liability of the defendants on the bond as to such fees is to his predecessor and not to the county. *Pugh v. Evans*, 31 Mo. App. 290; *Lycett v. Wolff*, 45 Mo. App. 489; *Allen v. Cowan*, 96 Mo. 193; *Pett v. White*, 43 Ia. 400. As was said in the first case cited, no public interest would be served by allowing money earned by the former clerk, which was within the limits of his salary, to go to the county. But it does not appear that these fees earned by Boettcher's predecessor were charged to the defendants by the trial court.

After allowing credit for the amount allowed the clerk by law, the court found a balance due the county of \$2,700. The items which we have heretofore found properly chargeable to the defendants aggregate \$2,561.49. This amount, with accruing interest, would justify the finding of the trial court, at least so far as the defendants are concerned.

It is recommended that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

A. S. MAIN V. SHERMAN COUNTY ET AL.

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,836.

Expert Witness: COMPENSATION. One testifying as an expert on a subject requiring special knowledge and skill, in the absence of a special contract, is entitled only to the statutory fee.

ERROR to the district court for Sherman county:
BRUNO O. HOSTETLER, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

H. M. Mathew, for plaintiff in error.

Joseph Pedler, contra.

ALBERT, C.

In this action the plaintiff, who is a duly licensed physician, was called by the prosecution and testified as an expert witness in a prosecution for homicide in the district court for the defendant county. He was paid the statutory witness fees, but afterwards filed a bill with the county board for additional compensation, claiming that he was entitled to such additional compensation because his testimony was not that of an ordinary witness, but such as required special knowledge and skill. His claim was rejected, and, on an appeal to the district court, a general demurrer to his petition was sustained, and judgment given accordingly.

In our opinion, the demurrer was properly sustained, and our opinion is based on no technical objection to the petition, but on the general proposition that one testifying as an expert on a subject requiring special knowledge and skill, in the absence of a special contract, is entitled only to the statutory fee. We are fully aware that the authorities are divided upon this proposition. Mr. Rogers in his work on *Expert Testimony* (2d ed.), sec. 188, says:

"There can be no doubt that professional men are not entitled, in this country, to claim any additional compen-

sation when testifying as ordinary witnesses to facts which happen to fall under their observation. But another question arises, when they are summoned to testify as to facts of science with which they have become familiar by means of special study and investigation, or to express opinions based upon the skill acquired from such researches, as to conclusions which ought to be drawn from certain given facts. Whether they can be compelled to testify in such cases, when no other compensation has been tendered than the usual fees of witnesses testifying to ordinary facts, is a point upon which the cases are not in harmony. In this country the cases are nearly balanced, and the question must be regarded as still an open one, although the weight of authority rather inclines to the theory that the expert may be required to answer without additional compensation."

We think it is hardly accurate to say that the authorities are nearly balanced. On careful examination of the authorities it will be found, we think, that, after the elimination of the cases resting on peculiar constitutional or statutory provisions, and on local customs, the decided weight of authority supports the conclusion reached by us. The following are some of the cases sustaining our conclusion: *Dixon v. People*, 168 Ill. 179, 39 L. R. A. 116; *Flinn v. Prairie County*, 60 Ark. 204, 27 L. R. A. 669; *Ex parte Dement*, 53 Ala. 389, 25 Am. Rep. 611; *State v. Teipner*, 36 Minn. 535; *Summers v. State*, 5 Tex. App. 365, 32 Am. Rep. 573; *Larimer County Commissioners v. Lee*, 3 Col. App. 177. It has been held that the state may require the services of its citizens, without compensation. *Bennett v. Kroth*, 37 Kan. 235, 1 Am. St. Rep. 248; *West v. State*, 1 Wis. *269; *Ex parte Chamberlain*, 4 Cow. (N. Y.) 49. Nor do we think the rule embodied in that conclusion so oppressive as it might appear at first glance. The benefits of civil government, of necessity, carry with them certain duties more or less onerous to the citizen. It not infrequently happens that the citizen is compelled to serve the state at a pecuniary loss. When an officer armed

with a warrant commands the assistance of a citizen in making an arrest, the latter, however valuable his time, is not permitted to stand and bicker for fees. When called to serve as a juror, a citizen will not be heard to complain that the compensation fixed by law is inadequate. As to compensation in such matters, the scale is fixed without regard to calling or countenance, and the common laborer and the man of large affairs, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, are on equal footing. As was said in the *Dement* case, *supra*, quoting Ordroneaux, Jurisprudence of Medicine: "The administration of justice being a source of mutual benefit to all the members of the community, each is under obligation to aid in furthering it, as a matter of public duty. As an *ordinary* witness or a juror, every competent citizen may be summoned by due process of law to appear, and render personal service in court, without right on his part to a special compensation for so doing. His time is, *quoad hoc*, claimed by the public as a tax paid by him to that system of laws which protects his rights as well as those of others."

It is recommended that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

DANIEL L. JOHNSON, APPELLEE, V. BENJAMIN D. HAYWARD
ET AL., APPELLANTS.*

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,840.

1. Real Estate Agents: CONTRACT: STATUTE OF FRAUDS. A contract whereby one person employs an agent to negotiate for the purchase of real estate is not a contract for the creation of an estate

*Rehearing allowed. See opinion, p. 166, *post*.

Johnson v. Hayward.

- or interest in land, or trust or power over or concerning lands, etc., within the meaning of the statute of frauds.
2. **Principal and Agent: TRUSTS.** Where one employed to act as the agent for another in the purchase of real estate becomes the purchaser himself, he will be considered in equity as holding the property in trust for his principal, although he purchased with his own money, subject to reimbursement for his proper expenditures in that behalf.
 3. **Title to Land: EQUITY.** The maxim "prior in time, prior in right," applied in a contest between rival claimants under equitable titles to real estate.
 4. **Evidence examined, and held** sufficient to sustain the findings and decree of the trial court.

APPEAL from the district court for Howard county:
JAMES N. PAUL, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

T. T. Bell, F. J. Taylor and M. B. Reese, for appellants.

D. L. Johnson, A. A. Kendall and O. A. Abbott, contra.

ALBERT, C.

In this suit the plaintiff seeks to have a trust declared and enforced with respect to certain real estate. The pleadings are unnecessarily voluminous, covering some 35 pages of the record. Reduced to their simplest form, the ultimate facts relied upon by the plaintiff to entitle him to the relief sought are: That the defendant, Benjamin D. Hayward, while under an oral contract of agency with the plaintiff to negotiate on behalf of the plaintiff for the purchase of certain real estate, negotiated therefor and bought the same for his own use and benefit, taking the title thereto in the name of the defendant Day, his nephew, who later conveyed to the defendant Mary F. Hayward, the wife of defendant Benjamin D. Hayward, in trust and for the use of her said husband; that afterwards, the defendants Mary F. Hayward and Benjamin D. Hayward borrowed \$1,200 of the defendant Paul, and as security therefor deposited the conveyance of the land from Day to Mary F. Hayward, which had not been re-

corded; afterwards, Benjamin D. Hayward, acting as the agent of his wife, entered into a written contract with the defendant Mathiason for a sale of the land to the latter for \$2,700, receiving on the purchase price \$500; that afterwards, Mathiason entered into a written contract with the defendant Kohler for the sale of the land to the latter for \$3,000, upon which there was paid \$500. The court found for the plaintiff, took an account of the expenditures and charges of defendant Benjamin D. Hayward in the premises, of the amount due on the Paul mortgage, and the amount due Kohler on account of the \$500 paid by him on his contract with Mathiason, and entered a decree requiring a conveyance of the land to the plaintiff upon payment of the amount found due Benjamin D. Hayward, and made such order for the distribution of the proceeds of said payment as would protect the defendants Paul and Kohler as to the money by them respectively advanced on the land. The case is here on defendant's appeal, the defendant Paul not participating.

The contract of agency upon which the plaintiff relies rests wholly in parol, and no part of the consideration which the agent Hayward paid for the land was advanced by the plaintiff, and the principal contention of the defendants in this case is that it falls within the provisions of section 3 of our statute of frauds (ch. 32, Comp. St.), which is as follows: "No estate or interest in land, other than leases for a term not exceeding one year from the making thereof, nor any trust or power over or concerning lands, or in any manner relating thereto, shall hereafter be created, granted, assigned, surrendered or declared, unless by operation of law, or by a deed or conveyance in writing, subscribed by the party creating, granting, assigning, surrendering, or declaring the same." Among other authorities supporting this contention are the following: *Burden v. Sheridan*, 36 Ia. 125; 2 Story, *Equity Jurisprudence* (13th ed.), secs. 1201, 1201a; 1 Perry, *Trusts* (5th ed.), sec. 135. The Iowa case just cited deserves more than a passing notice, because it is

hardly distinguishable on principle from the case at bar. As in this case the contract of agency was oral, and the principal had advanced no part of the consideration for the land. The court held that the contract, being oral, came within the section of the statute of frauds of that state corresponding with that section of our own statute just quoted, and that, no part of the consideration having been paid by the principal, the case did not fall within another provision, which provides that the section referred to shall not apply where the purchase money, or any portion thereof, has been received by the vendor. In the absence of an express statutory provision, part payment of the purchase price in and of itself is not regarded as such part performance of an oral contract as will relieve against the statute. It seems to us that in the defendants' argument, as well as in the authorities cited in support of it, there is a failure to distinguish between those cases where an estate or interest in land, or some trust or power over or concerning lands, is one of the considerations of the contract, and is acquired as a direct result thereof, and those where such estate, interest, trust or power is not such consideration, and is not acquired as a direct result of the contract, but which arises as a remote result of the contract and from an abuse of the relations thereby established. It is not claimed by the plaintiff that at the time he made his contract with Hayward he thereby acquired any title, legal or equitable, to the land, or that any trust or power over or concerning the land was thereby created. On the contrary, the most he claims for that contract is that it created between him and Hayward the relation of principal and agent. The land itself, or any interest or trust or power over and concerning the land, was no part of the consideration moving from either party to the other. The consideration which the plaintiff agreed to pay was the value of Hayward's service, and the consideration moving from Hayward was the service he undertook to render as the plaintiff's agent. That an oral contract creating an agency, although for the purchase or sale of

real estate, is valid, is clearly established by the authorities. In one of the head-notes to *Griffith v. Woolworth*, 28 Neb. 715, the rule is laid down that "where a land owner employs an agent to procure a purchaser for his real estate upon certain terms and conditions, the contract of employment need not be in writing." This was regarded as the settled law of this state up to the time of enactment of section 74, chapter 73, Compiled Statutes (Ann. St. 10258), which took effect April 12, 1897, requiring every contract for the sale of land between the owner thereof and any broker or agent to sell the same to be in writing. There is no similar provision in regard to contracts for the purchase of real estate by agents. In the absence of a statute like the above, there is no such difference in principle between a contract with an agent to negotiate a sale and one to negotiate a purchase, as would make one fall within section 3 of the statute of frauds, and the other without. That the former does not fall within the statute of frauds was the view of this court in *Griffith v. Woolworth*, *supra*, and this view was recognized as sound, and acted upon by the legislature by the enactment of sec. 74, *supra*, otherwise there was no necessity for the enactment of that section. That an oral contract for the employment of an agent to buy or sell land is not within the statute of frauds is settled by a long line of authorities, which are collated in 29 Am. & Eng. Ency. Law (2d ed.), 892.

If then it be competent, and we are clearly of the opinion that it is, to establish the contract of agency by parol testimony, the question then arises whether parol testimony is competent to establish the trust in this case, or whether the plaintiff will be relegated to his remedy at law for damages for breach of contract. Section 4 of our statute of frauds expressly provides that section 3 shall not be construed to prevent any trust from arising or being extinguished by implication or operation of law. A similar provision exists in all the states. This provision includes all resulting and constructive trusts, or it might be said,

it includes all trusts which are not created by the express terms of a contract. In this case, the plaintiff is not seeking to enforce an express trust. He is seeking to enforce what he claims is a trust which arises or results from an abuse of the confidential relations existing between him and the defendant Hayward, by virtue of their contract of agency. The rule is well settled that an agent instructed to purchase property for his principal will not be permitted, without his principal's knowledge and consent, to become the purchaser of the same property for himself; and if he makes such purchase, he will, although he purchased with his own money, be considered as holding the property in trust for his principal, and the latter upon repaying or tendering him the amount of the purchase price and his reasonable compensation, may by proper proceeding in equity compel a conveyance to himself. Mechem, Agency, sec. 457.

The case of *Rosc v. Hayden*, 35 Kan. 106, like this case, was brought to enforce a trust in property which the plaintiff had bought in his own name and for his own use, while bound by an oral contract to purchase it for the plaintiff. The plaintiff had paid no part of the consideration. There the court discussed the statute of frauds as affecting cases of this kind at length, and held that the statute does not apply, and that the trust should be enforced. The case contains an interesting review of the leading authorities in this class of cases. Among the authorities cited is *Jenkins v. Eldredge*, 3 Story (U. S. C. C.), 181, 289, which was reported after the text from Story, *supra*, was written. In that case the learned judge says:

"It appears to me, that here a confidential relation of principal and agent did exist; and that being once shown, it disables the party from insisting upon the objection, that the trust is void, as being by parol. The very confidential relation of principal and agent has been treated, as for this purpose, a case *sui generis*. It is deemed a fraud for an agent to avail himself of his confidential relation to drive a bargain, or create an interest adverse

to that of his principal in the transaction; and that fraud creates a trust, even when the agency itself may be, nay must be, only by parol. *Bartlett v. Pickersgill*, 1 Eden (Eng.), 515; 1 Cox, Ch. (Eng.) 15; 4 East (Eng.), 577, note, and *Leman v. Whitely*, 4 Russ. (Eng.) *423, are, I admit, against this doctrine—not wholly, but to a limited extent; for the latter case excludes a case of fraud. But then *Lees v. Nuttall*, 1 Russ. & M. (Eng.), 53, expressly decides, that if an agent employed to purchase an estate, purchase for himself and on his own account, he becomes a trustee for the principal. In that case the whole agency and trust was made out by parol, and the purchase was from a third person. *Carter v. Palmer*, 1 Bligh (Eng.), 397, 418, goes the full length of the same proposition.”

Section 4 of our statute of frauds, as we have seen, expressly excepts from the operation of section 3 trusts which arise by implication or operation of law. In our opinion, the trust sought to be enforced in this case falls within that exception, and should be enforced. We are aware, as will be seen from the foregoing, that there are authorities holding a contrary doctrine, but the reasoning upon which they are based is unsatisfactory, and contrary, we think, to the fundamental maxims of equity.

It is insisted that the evidence is insufficient to sustain a finding of any contract of agency between the plaintiff and Hayward. To set out the evidence on this point would unduly extend this opinion, and after set out, the most that could be urged in behalf of the defendants would be that it is conflicting. The witnesses were before the trial court; that gave such court advantages in weighing their testimony which we do not possess, and even without allowing for that advantage, we should hesitate, in view of the entire record, to hold that the evidence is not sufficient to sustain the finding. In this connection our attention is called to the fact that the plaintiff leased the land from the defendant Day after the latter had acquired the legal title. This fact, if unexplained, would

tell heavily against the plaintiff. But his explanation is that Hayward told him that Day had offered the owners \$1,500 for the land, that being \$100 more than the plaintiff had offered; that his offer had been accepted, and that he had got the land, when, in truth, Day's purchase had been negotiated by Hayward, and the land was sold to him on the exact terms plaintiff had authorized Hayward to buy it for him. Believing that the land had been sold to Day in good faith, plaintiff leased the land from Day. This explanation is not unreasonable, and the fact of the leasing, as thus explained, is not inconsistent with plaintiff's present claim.

It is also urged that at the time the contract of agency was made, plaintiff knew that Hayward had the land for sale as the agent of the owner. It is not quite clear that Hayward was the agent for the owner of the land, but it does appear that he had listed it for sale at the request of a company which apparently was acting as agent of the owner, and plaintiff knew that fact. But it also appears that at the time plaintiff employed Hayward, he asked him, pointedly, whether there was any reason why he could not act for him in the purchase of the land, and was assured by Hayward that there was none. In the face of this statement we think the plaintiff had a right to assume that there was nothing in the terms on which the lands were listed with Hayward that would be inconsistent with Hayward's acting for him in negotiating a purchase of the land. The mere listing of property with a broker for sale does not necessarily constitute the broker the owner's agent to make the sale; under such circumstances the broker is frequently, and with perfect propriety, the agent, not of the owner, but of the purchaser.

It is strenuously urged that both Day and Mrs. Hayward are innocent purchasers, and took their respective titles in good faith, and not in trust for Benjamin D. Hayward. Day never advanced but \$100 of the purchase price. He never saw the land, and his contract therefor

was kept in the safe of his uncle Benjamin D. Hayward. When the time came to take his deed, he decided not to take the land, and his \$100 was returned to him in the form of a check from his said uncle. About one month later, he quitclaimed to Mrs. Hayward, his aunt, and the wife of Benjamin D. Hayward. As we have seen, the \$100 paid Day for his relinquishment came from his uncle; the rest of the money required for Mrs. Hayward's purchase was borrowed on the joint note of herself and her said husband; the money thus raised was deposited in the bank to the credit of the husband, and checked out to pay for the land by him and in his own name. In short, the husband, Benjamin D. Hayward, seems to be the central figure in all these several family transactions. From all the facts and circumstances we think the trial court was warranted in finding that Day and Mrs. Hayward were mere instrumentalities employed by Benjamin D. Hayward to hold the beneficial title to the property to his own use.

Another contention of the defendants is that Mathiason and Kohler, respectively, are innocent purchasers, and are entitled to hold the land as against the plaintiff. So far as the money paid by them, or either of them, is concerned, they are fully protected by the decree. Mathiason had already transferred his interest to Kohler, and the decree affects Kohler only in so far as it requires the conveyance of the land to the plaintiff, instead of to him. The decree provides for the payment to him of the amount he had invested in the land. But neither Mathiason nor Kohler come under the general rule applicable to innocent purchasers. Neither of them had any legal title. Whatever title they had was purely equitable. It is a familiar rule of equity that where the equities are equal, that which is prior in point of time shall prevail. Elaborating on that rule in *Boone v. Chiles*, 10 Peters (U. S.), 176, the court say:

"A purchaser with notice may protect himself under a purchaser by deed without notice; but cannot do it by

Johnson v. Hayward.

purchase from one who holds or claims by contract only; the cases are wholly distinct. In the former, the purchaser with notice is protected; in the latter, he has no standing in equity, for an obvious reason—that the plaintiff's elder equity shall prevail, unless the defendant can shelter himself under the legal title, acquired by one whose conscience was not affected with fraud or notice, and who can impart his immunity to a guilty purchaser, as the representative of his legal rights, fairly acquired by deed, in such a manner as exempts him from the jurisdiction of court of equity."

To the same effect are the following: *Smith v. Orton*, 18 L. ed. (U. S.) 62; *Woods v. Dille*, 11 Ohio, 455; *Anketel v. Converse*, 17 Ohio St. 11; *Worden v. Crist*, 106 Ill. 326.

As the plaintiff in this cause was first in time, under the well known maxim of equity, he must be held to be first in right.

In our opinion, the decree of the district court is just and equitable, and ought to be affirmed.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the decree of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

The following opinion on rehearing was filed April 5, 1906. *Judgment of affirmance adhered to:*

A broker whose undertaking merely is to find a purchaser at a price fixed by the seller, or at a price which shall be satisfactory to the seller when he and the purchaser meet, is in reality only a middleman, whose duty is performed when the buyer and seller are brought together.

DUFFIE, C.

Because of Johnson's knowledge that Hayward was acting for the Fidelity Trust Company of Kansas City,

and had this land listed on his books when the offer of \$1,400 was forwarded to the company, we had doubts whether Johnson ought to rely upon Hayward's representing him in the transaction, and therefore recommended a rehearing in the case. If, at the time Johnson employed Hayward, he knew that the latter was already acting as agent for another in the sale of this land, then he had knowledge that Hayward could not properly act for him in the capacity of agent, and ordinarily would have no right to rely upon his doing so. It was upon this ground alone that a rehearing was allowed, and not because we had any doubts of the correctness of our former opinion upon the other questions involved. In order that this phase of the case may be understood, it will be necessary to state some facts not set out in the former opinion.

In 1900 the plaintiff's wife owned the northeast quarter of section 15, township 16, range 10 west, in Howard county, Nebraska. He bought of the owners of the fee the adjoining northwest quarter of section 14, 145 acres of which was subject to a mortgage held by one Newton. This mortgage was in process of foreclosure, a decree having been entered for \$1,577.14, a sum in excess of the real value of the land at that date. Johnson desired this land, and was seeking the owner of the mortgage for the double purpose of saving the expense of a sale on the decree of foreclosure and of purchasing the mortgagee's right in the decree at what would be the fair cash value of the land. He was not able to get into communication with the parties representing Newton, and a sale under the decree took place, Newton being the purchaser and receiving the sheriff's deed. The conditions then existing were these: Johnson's wife owned the northeast quarter of section 15, Newton the west 145 acres of the northwest quarter of section 14 adjoining her on the east, and Johnson the east 15 acres of the northwest quarter of section 14, Newton's 145 acres lying between the land owned by Johnson and Mrs. Johnson. Johnson desired the whole half-section, and in order to obtain time in

which to find and communicate with Newton's representatives, Johnson set out to appeal from the decree of confirmation in the foreclosure case. Hayward, who had been his agent in all his other matters in Howard county up to this time, had been appointed guardian *ad litem* for one of the minor defendants in the foreclosure proceedings, and, knowing this, Johnson employed another attorney, one Nunn, to prosecute his appeal. Sometime after the foreclosure sale, Johnson and Hayward were driving in the country, and, the matter of the foreclosure coming up, Hayward informed Johnson that he was not attorney for the plaintiff, and thereupon Johnson employed him to assist Nunn in the appeal to the supreme court. This conversation and employment is denied by Hayward, but is conclusively established by his own letters to Johnson, upon whom he drew for funds to defray the expense of the appeal, as well also as by the testimony of Nunn. Under date of January 9, 1901, Hayward wrote Johnson: "There are no appeal bonds here * * * but if you desire I will prepare one and send to you." January 18 he wrote: "Bond in case of *Newton v. McCracken* received, and filed as of this date. Also approved." February 12 he wrote as follows: "In case of *Newton v. McCracken* the transcript has been made and served. * * * You can send on these costs, and we will get the matter started." February 27 he wrote: "Do you want the bill of exceptions made in *Newton v. McCracken*? It will have to be done on the 10th inst. Wire answer tonight." March 20 he wrote the following: "I will file the case of *Newton v. McCracken* in the supreme court at once, and have drawn on you for \$20, for costs, as per your telegram."

That he was acting as Johnson's attorney in the appeal cannot be doubted, however strongly he may deny the fact. Previous to the time when the appeal should be perfected, Johnson, who lived in Omaha, was called to Alaska, and did not return until sometime in August. Hayward, who had received the money to perfect the ap-

peal, neglected to file the papers, and the appeal failed. A deed was issued to Newton, the purchaser at the sheriff's sale. After Johnson's return from Alaska, he learned from Hayward that the appeal had not been perfected, and also that the Fidelity Trust Company of Kansas City had charge of the land. During all the time previous to this, Hayward had been Johnson's attorney in his efforts to secure this land, and to find someone who had authority to deal with it. On learning that the land was in the hands of the Fidelity Trust Company, Johnson asked Hayward if he was in a position to represent him in the purchase of the land, and Hayward replied that he was. Johnson then said to him: "Make them an offer of \$1,400. Send it by wire, and get a reply this afternoon before I leave for Omaha." Hayward wired the offer to the Fidelity Company, as follows: "9-21-01. Have offer \$1,400 cash McCracken land. Wire answer today." The Fidelity Company wrote in reply as follows: "We have your telegram of today reading 'Have offer \$1,400 cash McCracken land. Wire answer today.' We immediately upon receipt of your wire wired the owner advising him of the offer, and recommending acceptance. It is possible we may get a reply from him before the close of business, which is at one o'clock on Saturday; and if so, we will promptly advise you. If, however, the message is not received until later, we will advise you promptly Monday morning, or as soon as the message comes to hand." Newton, in the meantime, had become insane, and nothing further was done in the matter until November 19, 1901, when Fred C. Gowing, guardian for Newton, wrote the Fidelity Company as follows: "023,906. McCracken, held by Hiram C. Newton of Troy, N. H., I find needs attention, as I have just become his guardian as he has had a long sickness and has become insane. If the party will take the property now at the \$1,400, I will forward the necessary papers, if you will tell what form will be required." November 21, 1901, the Fidelity company wrote Hayward asking if it would be possible to secure a re-

newal of the offer of \$1,400 cash for the property, and advising him that the offer would be accepted. And on the 26th of November Hayward wired the Fidelity Company as follows: "Have sold McCracken, \$1,400 cash. Wire acceptance." In the meantime, and on October 3d, 1901, Hayward had written Johnson as follows: "D. L. Johnson, Omaha, Nebraska. I have had no reply thus far relative to the offer on the McCracken land. I wrote them again Monday, and expect an answer of some kind soon. I do not understand the delay. As soon as I hear I will write you. Yours, B. D. Hayward."

Hayward now says that the second offer made the Fidelity Trust Company of \$1,400 for the land was made on behalf of Day, but in the meantime he had led Johnson to believe that he was acting for him in the purchase. It clearly appears from the facts above stated that Hayward had no authority to make a sale of this land. At the most his employment by the Fidelity Trust Company was to act as a middleman to secure offers on the land and to bring the parties together.

Let us see how the matter stood when the pretended sale was made to Day. Newton had become insane, and a guardian of his person and estate had been appointed. This terminated the agency of the Fidelity Company for Newton. The guardian employed that company to obtain a renewal of the offer of \$1,400 for the land, and the company employed Hayward for the same purpose. The company and Hayward were not agents in the full sense of that term; they were middlemen to secure from a former proposed purchaser the renewal of a former offer made for the land. They come fully within the definition of Chief Justice Dixon in *Stewart v. Mather*, 32 Wis. 344, where he says: "A broker whose undertaking merely is to find a purchaser at a price fixed by the seller, or at a price which shall be satisfactory to the seller when he and the purchaser meet, is in reality only a 'middleman,' whose duty is performed when the buyer and seller are brought together." The case comes fully within the rule

announced in that case and followed in *Barry v. Schmidt*, 57 Wis. 172, 46 Am. R. 35. But if we admit that Hayward was agent of the Fidelity Company in the fullest sense of that word, still he had been employed by Johnson long prior to his engagement by the company, and his services and his duty were due to Johnson, and not to the company who afterwards employed him in the same matter. It is true that Hayward, if his employment by the company required of him the exercise of any judgment relating to the price to be asked for the land or the character of the proposed purchaser, should have informed it of his employment by Johnson to purchase for him; but that Johnson owed the company any such duty, or that he should have refused to continue Hayward as his agent on learning that the land had been listed with him, is not demanded by any rule of law or morals. Hayward, as Johnson's agent, owed him the duty of honesty and fidelity in the business for which he was employed. If he wished to become owner of the land, he should at least have informed his principal that he could no longer act for him in the matter, and place him in a position where he could have protected his interest by his own efforts or by employing another agent, and we doubt, even had he renounced his employment, whether the law would have allowed him to become a purchaser of the property without Johnson's consent, for, as well said by Judge Sanborn in *Trice v. Comstock*, 121 Fed. 620: "Wherever one person is placed in such a relation to another by the act or consent of that other, or by the act of a third person, or of the law, that he becomes interested for him, or interested with him, in any subject of property or business, he is in such a fiduciary relation with him that he is prohibited from acquiring rights in that subject antagonistic to the person with whose interests he has become associated." We recommend that the former opinion be adhered to.

ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the former opinion is adhered to.

AFFIRMED.

JOHN F. ANTHERS, APPELLEE, V. JOHN SCHROEDER ET AL.,
APPELLANTS, JOHN S. THOMPSON, APPELLEE.

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,845.

1. **Equity.** The mere fact that a creditor has been persistent and determined in his efforts to collect his debt, and has resorted to unnecessarily expensive and vexatious means to that end, affords no just ground for denying him equitable relief in the enforcement of his debt.
2. **Estoppel.** Where one by his conduct induces another to act on the supposition that certain conditions exist, he will not be heard to deny the existence of such conditions where the other would be prejudiced by such denial.
3. **Subrogation.** Ordinarily, a junior mortgagee is not entitled to be subrogated to a lien which did not exist when his mortgage was taken.
4. **Evidence examined,** and *held* to show sufficiently that the lien to which plaintiff seeks to be subrogated existed at the time his mortgage was taken.
5. **Laches.** The facts disclosed by the record *held* insufficient to show that the plaintiff has been guilty of such laches as to deprive him of his right to be subrogated to a superior lien.

APPEAL from the the district court for Clay county:
LESLIE G. HURD, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

John C. Hartigan, for appellants.

William M. Clark and *George H. Hastings*, for appellee
Anthes.

M. A. Hartigan, for appellee Thompson.

ALBERT, C.

This suit as originally brought involved the question of marshaling assets and subrogation. Plaintiff was denied

relief in the court below, and appealed to this court, where the decree of the district court was reversed. In the opinion, which is reported in 68 Neb. 370, it was definitely decided that the plaintiff was entitled to subrogation. In that opinion will also be found a somewhat extended statement of the facts necessary to an understanding of the case.

On the second trial in the district court the case was submitted on the same petition, but by the subsequent pleadings in the cause, filed after it had been remanded to the district court, certain new issues were raised, which will sufficiently appear in the discussion which follows. A second trial in the district court resulted in a finding for the plaintiff, and a decree subrogating him to Thompson's mortgage lien on the Jefferson county land, and the case is now here on an appeal from that decree.

One defense urged at this time is that the conduct of the plaintiff in his efforts to enforce his debt has been so inequitable and unconscionable as to deprive him of any right to equitable relief. On that proposition, like every other, we are limited to the record. While it would seem from the record that the plaintiff might have attained his object with less litigation, and at less expense to himself and his debtor, the most that can be said of it is that it shows a persistent and determined effort, perhaps not always wisely directed, on the part of the plaintiff to collect his debt, but does not, so far as we are able to learn, bring him within any rule of equity which would deny him the use of the only remedy left for the enforcement of what must be admitted to be a lawful claim.

Another defense urged is that the plaintiff by reason of laches has lost his right to claim subrogation. We have been referred to no laches of which he has been guilty since this court held that he was entitled to subrogation, nor does it appear that the alleged laches have been in any way prejudicial to third persons. Where the rights of third parties had not intervened, subrogation was allowed after a delay of ten years, in *Home Investment Co. v. Clarson*. 15 S. Dak. 513; of seven years, in

Kinkead v. Ryan, 64 N. J. Eq. 454; of four years, in *Darrow v. Summerhill*, 24 Tex. Civ. App. 208.

It is insisted that Thompson's Jefferson county mortgage was given after the plaintiff's mortgage on the Clay county land, and that the plaintiff is not entitled to be subrogated to a lien which did not exist when his mortgage was taken. The rule invoked is sound (Sheldon, Subrogation, sec. 67), but the evidence, we think, does not bring this case within that rule. In reaching that conclusion we have assumed, as it was assumed on the argument, that plaintiff's renewal note and mortgage taken January 2, 1896, places him in no better plight than he was in by virtue of his original mortgage, which is dated March 29, 1905. Schroeder testifies positively that the Jefferson county mortgage to Thompson was given after the mortgage to the plaintiff, referring of course to the original mortgage. This evidence is not only contradicted by the plaintiff, but is considerably discredited by the facts and circumstances surrounding the entire transaction. When the negotiations for the loan from Thompson were pending, the plaintiff held the title to the Clay county land, Schroeder having merely a contract with him for its purchase. The arrangement appears to have been that, to enable Schroeder to make the loan from Thompson, the plaintiff was to convey the fee title to him, and take back a second mortgage for the balance of the purchase price. This mortgage was to be junior to Thompson's. Thompson at first intended to take the Clay county land alone as security, but before closing the loan insisted upon and obtained a mortgage on the Jefferson county land. The mortgage on the Jefferson county land, although dated one day later than the mortgage on the Clay county land, was a part of the same transaction. It would seem from the record that the two mortgages were delivered at the same time, and before the money realized on the loan was paid. Plaintiff's mortgage bears even date with the mortgage on the Jefferson county land. Taking the evidence on this point as a whole, and the nature and object of the several

transactions, we are not required to indulge any violent presumptions in favor of the findings of the trial court to sustain its findings against the defendants on this point.

Another defense strenuously urged is that, at the time the mortgage on the Jefferson county land was given, it was orally agreed between Schroeder and Thompson that it should be effective only in case the Clay county land proved insufficient to satisfy the debt. We think the trial court very properly held against the defendants on this proposition. There is nothing on the face of the mortgage on the Jefferson county land to indicate that it was not security for the Thompson loan as fully and effectively as was the mortgage on the Clay county land, given to secure the same debt. Plaintiff testified that it was understood between him and Schroeder that the Thompson loan should be secured by mortgage on both these tracts of land, and that he was thereby induced to convey the Clay county land to Schroeder and take a second mortgage for the remainder of the purchase price. By giving two mortgages to Thompson, without incorporating the alleged oral agreement in either of them, Schroeder effectively gave it out to the world that the Clay county land and the Jefferson county land were both and alike liable for the satisfaction of the debt. After the plaintiff had acted upon conditions as they were made to appear to be by Schroeder's own act, Schroeder cannot now be heard to urge a secret agreement between himself and Thompson, the effect of which would be to deprive the plaintiff of any right to which he was entitled by virtue of the conditions as they were thus made to appear. In other words, having induced the plaintiff to act on the supposition that certain conditions existed which would give the plaintiff a right to be subrogated to the lien of Thompson, he cannot now be heard to say that, by virtue of a secret agreement with Thompson, such conditions did not exist.

In our judgment the decree of the district court ought to be affirmed, and it is so recommended.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

ADOLPH ROSENBERG V. JOHN C. SPRECHER.*

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,801.

1. **Tenancy: HOLDING OVER: PRESUMPTION.** Where a tenant holds over his term, the law presumes a continuation of his original tenancy for another like term, but this presumption is not conclusive.
2. ———: **ACTION.** To sustain an action for the use and occupation of real estate, the relation of landlord and tenant must exist between the parties by agreement, either express or implied
3. ———: **ELECTION.** Where a tenant holds over his term, the landlord has the option to treat him as a trespasser or as a tenant for a new term, and the exercise of that right by the landlord is conclusive against him, and he cannot impose new terms upon the tenant without his consent.
4. **The instructions** given by the court in this case examined, and *held* not to conform to the issues and erroneous.

ERROR to the district court for Colfax county: JAMES A. GRIMISON, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

George W. Wertz, for plaintiff in error.

George H. Thomas, contra.

JACKSON, C.

This is a proceeding in error to reverse a judgment of the district court for Colfax county. The defendant in error, who will hereinafter be styled plaintiff, instituted an action in the court below against the plaintiff in error, who will hereinafter be styled defendant, to recover rent which he claimed from the defendant for the use and occupancy of plaintiff's property, and for certain moneys

* Rehearing allowed. See opinion, p. 183, *post*.

which he claimed to have expended for the defendant, and which the defendant promised to repay. The allegations of the petition important to the inquiry may be summed up as follows: That on the 17th day of March, 1902, the defendant was and had been plaintiff's tenant from month to month, and as such in the occupancy of a certain store building at an agreed monthly rental of \$50 a month, payable in advance; that on that date, at defendant's request, plaintiff furnished and turned over to the defendant for his use as such tenant an additional room in the building, under agreement between the plaintiff and defendant that defendant was to pay plaintiff on account of such additional room and additional rental of \$10 a month; that on the 1st day of April, 1902, the defendant refused to pay the plaintiff the additional rent contracted for, for the period between March 17 and March 31 inclusive, and that thereupon the plaintiff notified said defendant to vacate said building and to cease to occupy the same by May 1, 1902; and at the same time notified the defendant that if he continued to use and occupy the building from and after May 1, 1902, he would be required to pay plaintiff for such use and occupancy at the rate of \$65 a month during the time that he continued to use and occupy the same; that the defendant continued in possession of said store building up to and including the 4th day of August, 1902, and that he failed to notify the plaintiff prior to the 4th day of August of his intention to vacate the building, but that he vacated the building without any notice whatever to plaintiff, and that, by reason of these facts, became indebted to plaintiff in the sum of \$324.67; that he paid the plaintiff on that account the sum of \$206.67; that the rental value of the property was reasonably worth the amount charged by the plaintiff. It was further alleged as a second cause of action that about the 1st day of January, 1902, the plaintiff paid out the sum of \$4.75 for the use and benefit of the defendant; that the defendant promised to repay the plaintiff the sum so paid out, but has refused to do so. The plaintiff

claimed judgment for \$123 75, with interest. Defendant, by his answer, admitted that on the 17th of March, 1902, he was, and prior thereto had been, a tenant of plaintiff from month to month; that he was in possession of the store building, and was paying an agreed monthly rental of \$50 a month, payable in advance. His answer recites that on or about the 1st day of August, 1901, he entered into a verbal contract with the plaintiff, according to the terms of which the plaintiff agreed to furnish the defendant additional room in the building, to enlarge the cellar, and otherwise to improve the building; that after such additional room and other improvements were completed he was to pay an additional rental of \$10 a month; that the plaintiff never complied with the terms of the contract, and disclaimed any liability for additional rent claimed; pleaded payment of rent at the rate of \$50 a month from the time that he continued in possession of the property, and that on or about May 1, 1902, the plaintiff instituted legal proceedings against the defendant to oust him from the possession of said premises; that he occupied the premises up to the 4th day of August, 1902, to which time he paid plaintiff rental at the rate of \$50 a month, and that the amount paid was the reasonable and fair rental value of the premises so occupied by him. He denied the other allegations of the petition, and pleaded a counterclaim, which it is unnecessary to notice. Plaintiff replied, denying all the allegations of the answer, and alleging that the amount paid by the defendant after the 1st of April, 1902, was paid and received with an understanding and agreement between the plaintiff and defendant that the acceptance should in nowise affect or prejudice plaintiff's claim for additional rent.

The evidence discloses that the plaintiff and defendant had for several years prior to this controversy sustained the relation of landlord and tenant; that during the year 1901 it was agreed between them that the plaintiff should build an additional story on the building occupied by the defendant, and provide additional room for the defendant

in the second story. There is some dispute about other improvements, which the defendant claims were a part of the inducement for the agreement, and which the plaintiff denies. Both parties, however, agree that the tenant was to pay an additional rental of \$10 a month when the improvements agreed upon were made; that on the 16th or 17th of March, 1902, the plaintiff notified the defendant that the additional room was ready for his use and occupancy, the plaintiff claiming that he had performed his part of the agreement, the defendant insisting that the improvements had not been completed as agreed upon and refusing to occupy the new room provided by the plaintiff, or to pay rent therefor. On the 1st day of April, 1902, the plaintiff caused to be served on the defendant a written notice to vacate the premises and to cease to occupy the same by the 1st day of May following, and also saw the defendant personally and informed him that if he wanted to occupy the premises after the 1st of May, he would require him to pay rent at the rate of \$65 a month. It is also in evidence that about the 1st of May he instituted legal proceedings against the defendant to recover the possession of the premises.

The second instruction given by the court on its own motion is, in part, as follows: "An itemized statement of the claims now made by both parties is here made, to assist you in applying the evidence and making the computation, as follows: "Plaintiff claims on first cause of action:

- "1. Additional rent from March 17, 1902, to March 31, 1902, at \$10 per month..... \$4.67
- "2. Additional rent for April, 1902.....\$10.00
- "3. Additional rent for May, 1902.....\$15.00
- "4. Additional rent for June, 1902.....\$15.00
- "5. Additional rent for July, 1902.....\$15.00
- "6. Balance for August.....\$58.33."

In the ninth instruction given by the court on its own motion, the court said to the jury: "If you believe from the evidence that the agreement was as alleged by the plaintiff, and that on the 17th day of March, 1902, he had

completed and fulfilled all that he was required to do by the terms of said contract, and that he turned the additional room over to the defendant, completed according to agreement, you will find for the plaintiff as to the first item in the statement given in instruction 2, also for the plaintiff on the second item contained in said statement, also for \$10 of the third item; also for the plaintiff on the fourth item of said statement; also for the plaintiff on the fifth item of said statement; and if you further find from the evidence that the plaintiff notified the defendant on the 1st day of April, 1902, that, if he remained in the occupancy of said premises after May 1, 1902, he should pay as rent the sum of \$65 per month, then you should find for the plaintiff in the full amount of the third item of said statement." To the giving of this instruction the defendant excepted, made complaint in the motion for a new trial, and also has assigned the giving of it as error in his petition.

The rule is well and satisfactorily settled in this state that, to sustain an action for the use and occupation of real estate, the relation of landlord and tenant must exist between the parties by agreement, either express or implied. *Skinner v. Skinner*, 38 Neb. 756; *Janouch v. Pence*, 3 Neb. (Unof.) 867. It is also true that where a tenant with the consent of his landlord, either expressed or implied, holds over his term, the law presumes a continuation of his original tenancy for another like term, but that this presumption is not conclusive. *Bradley v. Slater*, 50 Neb. 682; *Montgomery v. Willis*, 45 Neb. 434. Where a tenant holds over his term the landlord has the option to treat him as a trespasser, or as a tenant for a new term. *Bradley v. Slater, supra*; *Merchants State Bank of Fargo v. Ruettell*, 12 N. Dak. 519, 97 N. W. 853. Where a landlord has the right of election, and may treat the tenant as a trespasser or as a tenant holding over, the exercise of that right by the landlord is conclusive against him, and he cannot impose new terms upon the tenant without his consent. *Johnson v. Johnson*, 62 Minn. 302, 64 N. W. 905.

The case of *Johnson v. Johnson* was similar to the one now under consideration. Plaintiff leased the defendant certain premises in the city of St. Paul during such time as the plaintiff might permit the defendant to occupy the same, plaintiff reserving the right to terminate the lease by giving 30 days' notice. On the 9th of September, 1903, plaintiff gave the notice provided for by the lease. The defendant did not vacate. On the 14th of October, 1893, plaintiff served an additional notice, stating therein that if defendant remained in possession of the premises the rent from that time on would be \$75 a month. The defendant still continued to occupy the premises until May, 1894. In November, 1893, the plaintiff begun an action in the municipal court of the city of St. Paul, under the forcible entry and detainer act, to recover possession of the premises. The plaintiff had judgment, and upon appeal the judgment was affirmed. Thereupon plaintiff brought an action to recover rent at the rate of \$75 a month. Upon the trial in the district court the jury were instructed by the court to find a verdict for the plaintiff for the amount claimed by the claimant, and interest. The supreme court of Minnesota, upon an appeal, in discussing the plaintiff's claim that, if the defendant remained in possession of the premises after service of the second notice upon her, the rent thereafter would be \$75 a month as long as she remained in possession of the premises, said:

"The force of this contention depends upon the question of whether, after the expiration of the thirty days' notice given to terminate the lease, there still existed the conventional relation of landlord and tenant. * * * The termination of the lease by the landlord became effectual at the expiration of the 30 days from September 9, 1893, and he did not elect to permit the defendant to remain there any longer as his tenant, but as a trespasser. She therefore continued upon the premises as a trespasser, certainly until October 14, when the notice to pay \$75 per month rent was served upon her. In no way did she recognize the existence of a continued tenancy, unless by remain-

ing in possession of the premises after the termination of the lease by express notice. She could not enlarge the character of her tenancy by simply remaining in possession after the landlord had terminated it by the written notice. The right to terminate the lease existed on the part of the landlord, and when he exercised that right she did not become a tenant by merely continuing in possession. She was there as a wrongdoer, because the landlord had elected to treat her as such, and not as a tenant. This was the condition of the parties until October 14, 1893, when he served a notice upon her that, if she continued to remain longer in possession of the premises, the rent from that time on would be \$75 per month. Did this notice alter the relation of the parties as they existed between the 9th and 14th days of October, 1893? The rule laid down in 1 Wood, Landlord and Tenant (2d ed.), page 25, sec. 13, is as follows: 'In all the cases the doctrine is held that as to the tenant who holds over he is a wrongdoer, and only becomes a tenant upon the terms of the old tenancy, because the landlord elects to treat him as such. By the mere act of holding over, he does not become a tenant from year to year. Something more must occur in order to show the existence of a tenancy by a renovation of the old contract, and this is done by the landlord making his election whether to treat him as a tenant, or as a trespasser, and the landlord's election is conclusive, both against himself and the tenant, and after he has once disaffirmed the tenancy while the holding over continues, he cannot afterwards set it up for the purpose of enforcing a claim for rent.' "

Applying the authorities cited to the case at bar, the conclusion seems irresistible that on the 1st day of May, 1902, the relation of landlord and tenant ceased to exist between the plaintiff and defendant because of the election of the plaintiff to treat the defendant as a trespasser and attempting to regain possession of his property by proceedings in forcible detention. The instruction complained of assumed that the relation of landlord and tenant existed

during the months of May, June and July, and therefore that, if the jury should find that the plaintiff had complied with his agreement to provide the additional room, he would be entitled to receive the \$10 a month additional rent because of the contract relation of landlord and tenant. This assumption on the part of the trial court was erroneous, and the instruction therefore not only erroneous, but prejudicial.

In instruction No. 11, given by the court on its own motion, the court said to the jury: "You are instructed that as to the claim of the plaintiff for rent in August, 1902, it is admitted that defendant has paid \$6.67. The plaintiff was entitled to 30 days' notice from the defendant of his intention to leave the premises, and his day for payment of rent had passed on August 4, when he left, that is, he had entered upon a new rental period without notice to the plaintiff. You will therefore find for the plaintiff on the sixth item of said statement." By reason of the conclusions already reached in this case, this instruction must also be held to be erroneous. The plaintiff could not treat the defendant as a trespasser, and at the same time require him to give 30 days' notice of his intention to vacate the premises.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings according to law.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings according to law.

REVERSED.

The following opinion on rehearing was filed October 19, 1905. *Affirmed upon condition:*

PER CURIAM.

Motion to modify sustained. Judgment of reversal vacated. Ordered that defendant be allowed to file a remittitur of \$73.33 from the judgment within 30 days, and, if such remittitur is filed, the judgment of the district court is affirmed for \$59.77; otherwise, the judgment is reversed and the cause remanded.

JUDGMENT ACCORDINGLY.

CITY OF OMAHA V. KATHERINE L. LEWIS.

FILED JUNE 8, 1905. No. 13,827.

The evidence examined, and *held* sufficient to justify the submission of the case to the jury.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: WILLIAM A. REDICK, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

John P. Breen, C. C. Wright and W. H. Herdman, for plaintiff in error.

A. N. Ferguson and Smyth & Smith, contra.

JACKSON, C.

This is a proceeding in error instituted by the city of Omaha in this court for the purpose of reversing a judgment of the district court for Douglas county in favor of the defendant in error against the city of Omaha on account of the personal injury which the plaintiff in the court below claimed to have sustained by reason of the dangerous condition of a sidewalk in that city. For convenience the parties will hereafter be designated as plaintiff and defendant, as they were designated in the court below.

The only question discussed by counsel is as to the sufficiency of the evidence upon the question of the dan-

gerous condition of the walk to sustain the verdict in plaintiff's favor. The plaintiff testified that she resided on Sherman avenue, some distance south of the place where the injury was sustained; that on the afternoon of January 10, 1903, she left her home, and upon her return came down Sherman avenue from the north; that during her absence there was a light fall of snow; she started home about five o'clock P. M., and that just north of Madison avenue she fell. In response to a question requiring her to state to the jury what the accident was, and how it took place, she said: "Well, I was walking along, and the walks were all right; of course, there was just a little light snow—hardly enough to cover it—it just probably did—I was walking along, and I hadn't taken but a few steps, I guess, on the ice when I slipped; I was going this way and I slipped this way and fell on my right wrist. Q. When did you first encounter any ice on the sidewalk? A. Well, I had only taken a few steps on the ice when I fell. Q. Whereabouts on Sherman avenue did you first find the ice? A. That was the first, north of Madison avenue. Q. How far had you proceeded on the ice when you fell? A. Just a short distance, quite a short distance. Q. About how far? A. Oh, I had only taken a few steps. Q. How long prior to this time had you passed over Sherman avenue? A. I hadn't been up there for weeks. Q. Well, how many weeks? A. Oh, probably I hadn't been that far on Sherman avenue—I had been up Sherman avenue, but not so far as that; probably I hadn't been over there since before Christmas, up past that place. Q. What knowledge did you have at that time of the condition of this walk at the point where you received this fall? A. Do you mean before I fell? Q. Yes. A. I didn't know anything about it. Q. Explain to the jury, if you can, how you came to fall, if you know. A. Why, I don't know, I just slipped and fell. I don't know how I came to fall. Q. What was the result of this fall? A. I broke my wrist. Q. Which one? A. The right one. Q. You fell to the right? A. Yes, sir. She also testified that she was unable

to get up, and called to a young man who had just passed her, and that he assisted her to his home. Frank Thompson, who assisted the plaintiff to arise and to the home of his parents, testified at the trial that Sherman avenue was the main street in that part of the city; he described the condition of the sidewalk where the plaintiff fell, as follows: The condition of the walk was that it was rough, and it was full of dent holes—foot marks—and they run from an inch to four inches deep, those gulleys in and out, and down, and rough and uneven; that the ice wasn't so thick near the outside of the walk, but that farther in it was about four inches deep; that it was rough and full of holes; some of the bumps were four inches in height; that this condition continued for about 100 feet or more north of Madison avenue; that the sidewalk along Sherman avenue north and south of this place had been cleaned off; that he passed the place twice a day during the latter part of December and January; that the walk had been in the condition described for at least a month, ever since the snow had fallen in the winter. Charles Lewis, a son of the plaintiff, visited the spot where the injury was sustained on the following morning; he described the condition as being rough where it had been tramped—looked like a cow yard; tramped all over and frozen there; snow and ice that is packed down; had been walked over and left ridged; was rough and uneven, just like it would be any place where it had been allowed to remain for a long time and walked over; it was rough; probably higher in the middle and lower at the outer edge where it had been tramped over; that the sidewalk had not been cleaned off at that place in the months of January and December. A. N. Ferguson, witness for the plaintiff, testified to having visited the place where the injury was sustained, and described its condition like this: As far as I can recollect, it seems to me that it was a rough condition of the walk; that it was covered with ice except possibly for a little space along by the curb line; that it seemed to be more or less ridged; that in the center and toward the bank, which

was some two or three feet high on the west from the sidewalk, there was quite a little strip there that was icy and snowy, and to a certain extent was ridged and uneven and rough; its ridges were something like four inches high, more or less, like the sidewalk had been covered with ice for a long time, and icy; sidewalk with some snow on it at various places; it was not smooth but was uneven; the sidewalk was covered with this ice largely; along the edge where the curb line is there were places where it had entirely disappeared, and at the center toward the walk it was higher and ridged up. The witness Shafer testified that the walk was full of ice and was very rough; had a covering of ice all the way from one inch to three or four inches, it had little bumps in it; that the ice was higher near the bank than it was near the curb, and was several inches high near the center of the walk.

This evidence is set out somewhat at length for the purpose of comparison with the evidence set out in the case of *Foxworthy v. City of Hastings*, 25 Neb. 133. In that case a verdict for the defendant was set aside by this court as not being supported by the evidence, and there seems at least to be as much reason for supporting the judgment in this case as there was for reversing the judgment in the *Foxworthy* case. In other words, if the evidence in the *Foxworthy* case showed a sufficient accumulation of ice and snow, such as to constitute an obstruction and impediment to travel, to justify this court in setting aside a verdict for the defendant as being contrary to the evidence, the evidence in this case, disclosing a similar condition of the walk, was sufficient to justify the submission of the case to the jury; and the case having been so submitted, and the jury having found for the plaintiff, and a judgment having been entered thereon, it should not be disturbed.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

STATE, EX REL. ORPHEUS B. POLK, RELATOR, v. AIGERNON
GALUSHA, SECRETARY OF STATE, RESPONDENT.

FILED JUNE 22, 1905. No. 14,256.

1. **Constitutional Law.** When it is obvious that portions of an act of the legislature were the principal if not the sole inducement for the passage of the act, and such parts are held to be unconstitutional because in conflict with the paramount law, the act will be declared void *in toto*.
2. **General Elections.** The provision of section 13, article XVI of the constitution, wherein it is provided, "The general election of this state shall be held on the Tuesday succeeding the first Monday of November of each year, except the first general election, which shall be on the second Tuesday in October, 1875," construed, and *held*, that it is not of itself an imperative command that general elections shall be held annually at the time stated. Whether annual elections are required depends upon the offices created by the fundamental law, and the time as therein provided at which an election must be held to fill such offices.
3. ———. By the provisions of the constitution, sections four (4); ten (10), fifteen (15), twenty (20) and twenty-one (21) of article six (6), and sections thirteen (13) and twenty (20) of article eighteen (18), judges of the supreme, district and county courts, and regents of the university, whose offices are created thereby, it is declared, shall be elected at the first general election held in 1875. The terms of these several officers are fixed at six, four and two years respectively, and the terms of office begin on the first Thursday after the first Tuesday in January next succeeding their election. Their successors in office, it is provided, shall thereafter be elected at the general election next preceding the time of the termination of their respective terms of office. *Held*, That these several provisions, when construed together, fix the terms of office, and the time of the beginning and termination of such terms, and the time of the first election, and that thereafter at the general election next preceding the time of the termination of each and every subsequent term of office, as they shall follow each other in succession, a successor shall be elected, and that

these several sections provide for a regular succession of and continuity in such terms of office, the force and effect of which are to make it mandatory that a general election shall be held in each of the odd numbered years.

4. **Term of Office.** Ordinarily, the word or words "term" or "term of office," when used in reference to the tenure of office, mean a fixed and definite period of time.
- 4a. ———. Section 20, article VI of the constitution, declares, "All officers provided for in this article shall hold their offices until their successors shall be qualified." *Held*, That this provision cannot properly be construed to mean that the legal terms of office of the officers provided for in said article, in the sense in which used in reference to the tenure of office, shall consist of the fixed and definite periods therein mentioned, and in addition thereto the indeterminate period which an incumbent may hold after the expiration of his fixed term, and until a successor shall be qualified.
5. ———: **LEGISLATIVE POWER.** Where by the fundamental law certain offices are created, the terms of office of which are fixed at certain definite periods of time, and the beginning and termination thereof prescribed, as well as the time for the election of a successor, the legislature is without authority to postpone the election of such successors until the succeeding general election held in the next year, and to extend the term of office of the incumbents during the intervening time, and to provide for an election in a different year in which to elect such successors, and a different time for the beginning of such terms of office.
6. **Constitution: INTERPRETATION.** Provisions found in the schedule of the constitution are not in all instances to be construed as of a temporary character. The language used should be given its ordinary meaning; and whether it is intended to be of a temporary or permanent character must be determined from the purpose of the enactment and the object sought to be accomplished thereby. The true meaning of the law is discovered by considering the reason and spirit of it, or the cause which moved the lawmaking body to enact it.
7. ———: **LEGISLATIVE CONSTRUCTION.** Courts will give weighty consideration to the legislative construction of the constitution when legislation is had regarding subjects of a political nature. But when such construction clearly appears to be unwarranted it will not be followed.
- 7a. **Constitutional Law.** The provisions of the biennial election law (laws 1905, ch. 65), the act under consideration, are found to be in conflict with the paramount law relative to the election of

judicial officers and regents of the university, and the time thereof, and of their terms of office; and for such reasons the act is held to be inoperative and void.

ORIGINAL application for a writ of mandamus to require respondent to place relator's name on official ballot. *Writ allowed.*

C. S. Allen and T. C. Munger, for relator.

L. M. Pemberton, amicus curiæ.

Norris Brown, Attorney General, W. T. Thompson, L. I. Abbott, J. J. Sullivan, Roscoe Pound and F. I. Foss, for respondent.

HOLCOMB, C. J.

Since the adoption of the present constitution, the statutes as heretofore existing have provided for the election of the judges of the supreme court, the regents of the university, judges of the district courts, and county judges, all of whose terms of office are fixed by the fundamental law, at a general election held in November of the odd numbered years. The terms of the different offices named vary; some being for six, some for four, and some two years, beginning on the first Thursday after the first Tuesday of January of the year next succeeding the time of the election. It is expressly provided by the constitution that the elections for state executive officers shall be held in the even numbered years, the first election to be held at the general election in November in 1876, and each succeeding election at the same relative time in each even year thereafter. Const. art. V, sec. 1. The legislature at its last session passed, and the governor approved, an act, the object and purpose of which is to provide for the election of all state, district, and county officers in even numbered years, and to repeal all existing laws in conflict therewith. This act is known as the biennial election law, since, if valid, general elections will be held hereafter in

this state only once in every two years, while heretofore annual elections have been the rule under laws as then existing.

The relator in this action has challenged the validity of the new act (laws 1905, ch. 65), on the ground that it is in conflict with several provisions of the organic law. The single issue before the court presented by the pleadings is in respect of the authority of the legislature to enact into law the measure referred to. The following sections of the constitution seem to have a bearing on the act under consideration either direct or remote, and which should here be stated as the basis of the discussion to follow. Section 13, article XVI, entitled "Schedule," declares that "the general election of this state shall be held on the Tuesday succeeding the first Monday of November of each year, except the first general election which shall be on the second Tuesday in October, 1875. * * * Judges of the supreme, district and county courts, * * * shall be elected at the first general election, and thereafter at the general election next preceding the time of the termination of their respective terms of office." Section 14 of the same article provides: "The terms of office of all state and county officers, of judges of the supreme, district and county courts, and regents of the university shall begin on the first Thursday after the first Tuesday in January next succeeding their election." Section 4 of article VI provides: "The judges of the supreme court shall be elected by the electors of the state at large; and their terms of office, except of those chosen at the first election, as hereinafter provided, shall be six years." Section 10 of article VI divides the state into six judicial districts, and provides for the election of a judge of the district court in each of said districts, "whose term of office shall be four years." Section 15 of the same article provides: "There shall be elected in and for each organized county one judge, who shall be judge of the county court of such county, and whose term of office shall be two years." Section 20 provides: "All officers provided for in this article

shall hold their offices until their successors shall be qualified." Section 21 provides: "In case the office of any judge of the supreme court, or of any district court, shall become vacant before the expiration of the regular term for which he was elected, the vacancy shall be filled by appointment by the governor, until a successor shall be elected and qualified, and such successor shall be elected for the unexpired term at the first general election that occurs more than thirty days after the vacancy shall have happened." Section 22, article XVI, provides: "The regents of the university shall be elected at the first general election under this constitution, and be classified by lot so that two shall hold their offices for the term of two years, two for the term of four years, and two for the term of six years."

The distinctive features of the present act and the one attempted to be repealed are quite marked. Section 1 of the old act, which embraced a general election law, provided the general election shall be held in November of each year. The same section of the new act provides that the general election of this state for the election of officers named in section 7 of this chapter shall be held in November of each even numbered year; and section 7 enumerates all state, district and county officers who under the old law were to be elected in the odd numbered years (with possibly some few exceptions provided for in separate acts), so that at the present time, if the new act be held valid, there are no offices to be filled and no officers to be elected at a general election to be held in the odd numbered years; and there being no officers to elect, there can, of course, be no election.

Keeping in mind the generally accepted canons of construction for the testing of the validity of legislative enactments when challenged on constitutional grounds, which are to the effect that the constitution is not a grant of powers, but is a limitation upon the authority to be exercised by the legislative branch of government, and that all reasonable doubts are to be resolved in favor of

the legality of the acts of the legislature, do the provisions of the act in question so conflict with the fundamental law as that the statute must be held nugatory and ineffectual to accomplish the legislative purpose?

1. We assume, without extended discussion, that if the act fails in its purpose to provide for biennial elections, and that notwithstanding its provisions annual elections are required to be held for the election of officers for one or more offices therein mentioned, because of the requirements of the organic law, the act is void *in toto* and of no effect for any purpose. It is hardly to be doubted that the principal, if not the sole, inducement for the passage of a measure of the kind being considered was for the purpose of avoiding the holding of general elections once in each and every year, and if this is not accomplished the whole act must fall and be declared invalid under the rule now well established in this jurisdiction. *State v. Farmers & Merchants Irrigation Co.*, 59 Neb. 1; *Crawford Co. v. Hathaway*, 60 Neb. 754; *State v. Poynter*, 59 Neb. 417; *State v. Magney*, 52 Neb. 508.

2. It is argued in behalf of relator that the portion of section 13, heretofore quoted, which says, "The general election of this state shall be held on the Tuesday succeeding the first Monday of November of each year," etc., is an imperative command requiring annual elections. The language used, when considered alone, does not, as it seems to us, unmistakably call for such construction, especially when viewed in the light of conditions existing at the time the present constitution was adopted. Prior to its adoption, and under the 1866 constitution, the elections for state and county officers in this state were held in the month of October, while the election of federal officers was required to be held in November. The principal object sought to be attained by the constitution makers, as it seems to us, was to have the general election for both state and federal officers held in November, and thus bring about greater uniformity, as well as add to the convenience of the electorate, and insure economy in time and

pecuniary expenditure in the operation of the election machinery of the state.

Had the language been, "A general election shall be held," etc., using the indefinite article "a" instead of the definite article "the," the language would have been, we think, more strongly in favor of the construction contended for by the relator. It would have added something to the view that the framers of the constitution, and the people in adopting it, intended that there should be an election in each year. Reading the sentence in the exact language in which we find it constructed, and keeping in view the conditions then existing in respect to the time of holding state and national elections, and it appears not to be an unreasonable construction to say that the main thought expressed is that the time of the general elections shall be in November of each year in which such an election is required to be held to fill any office created by law. The legislature having given such construction to the language regarding a subject of legislation purely political in its nature, we would now hardly be warranted in construing it differently in passing on the validity of such provision. It would lead to an absurdity to say that the constitution commanded that an election should be held annually, unless there were other provisions which necessarily require that certain of the offices therein created must be filled at such elections. Unless we can find in other provisions of the permanent law some requirements to the effect that certain officers ought to be elected at a general election, the time of the holding of which is so regulated by that instrument as that such election must be held in the odd numbered years as is required in the even years, we do not think we are driven by the language under consideration to the conclusion that a law providing for biennial elections is in excess of legislative authority. We are not to be understood as saying this language, when considered with its context and with other sections of the constitution, is not to be construed as an expression of the constitution makers indicative of an intention to so ar-

range the time of holding general elections as that a general election, if the terms of that instrument be observed and made effective, must be held once in each year. We only reject the idea, which is advanced by the relator, that the language standing alone is susceptible of no other construction than that annual elections are imperatively commanded. As has been said by the supreme court of Kansas in construing a constitutional provision somewhat similar: "The provision simply declares that annual elections shall be held on the Tuesday succeeding the first Monday in November, and was obviously intended to fix the time for general elections, and also to provide an annual opportunity for the election of officers who, under the law, are to be chosen annually, or to be elected in any year." *Wilson v. Clark*, 63 Kan. 505.

3. Construing the language of the several sections of the constitution which are quoted above as they relate to and have a bearing on each other, we find no serious difficulty in satisfying our minds that the purpose sought to be attained thereby is reasonably clear. If we are right in our construction of the several provisions as to their force and effect, they can readily be applied to the act under consideration in testing its validity. The terms of the offices of the judges of the supreme, district and county courts are fixed with definiteness and certainty. Section 4 is devoted exclusively to the terms of the supreme judges, while sections 10 and 15 refer especially to the offices of district and county judges. There can be no doubt and no room for construction as to the intention of the law-makers in this regard. By the provisions of section 13, article XVI, it is, in terms that cannot be well misunderstood, declared that the first general election shall be held in 1875, that judges of the supreme, district and county courts shall be elected at the first general election, and thereafter at the general election next preceding the time of the termination of their respective terms of office. That is, by these several sections, when construed together, as of course they ought to be in an effort to determine their

meaning, force and effect, the offices are provided for, the terms for which the office shall be held are fixed, the time of the general elections to fill such offices, the time when the first election shall be held and the time of holding the election for the successor of the incumbent just prior to the termination of his incumbency for the term for which elected are all provided for.

The law as a science possesses, it must be admitted, some elements of uncertainty, and can hardly be classed as one of the exact sciences. In respect, however, of the matter under consideration, the meaning of the framers of the constitution and of the people adopting it, it would seem, can be ascertained to almost the certainty of a mathematical demonstration. The first election to fill these offices is required to be held at the general election in 1875. The terms of office are six, four and two years, respectively. The terms begin on the first Thursday after the first Tuesday of January next succeeding the time of the election. The election of successors is to be had at the general election next preceding the time of the termination of their respective terms of office. The terms begin and end in January of the even numbered years, and the general election next preceding is the election to be held in the odd numbered years. Thus, as it appears to us, the constitution declares in unmistakable terms that these officers shall be elected and the offices filled at a general election which is required to be held in the years alternating with the general elections provided for state executive officers in the even numbered years. Of course, the language used to express the will of the people in this regard in the fundamental law could have been more specific and direct, but we must accept the wording as we find it in the law, and give to it its fair meaning and reasonable import.

But again, by the provisions of section 21, if the office becomes vacant, the governor is to appoint a person to fill such vacancy, and such appointee can hold only until his successor is elected and qualified, and the successor, when

elected, is chosen for the remainder of the unexpired term. The constitution by these several sections provides not only for the first term after its adoption, but for the second and all subsequent terms. The arrangement of the terms is made continuous. The word "thereafter" found in section 13 can have no other meaning than that at the general election next preceding the time of the termination of each and every subsequent term of office, as they shall follow each other in succession, a successor shall be elected. Unless, then, the terms of office may be extended or are different from the fixed and definite periods of six, four, and two years, respectively, the conclusion is, we think, inevitable that the act under consideration contravenes the paramount law. In this connection, we think it permissible to briefly refer to the history of the state, and to its laws anterior to the adoption of the present constitution, as they relate to the election laws as then existing. By the constitution of 1866 the terms of the judges of the supreme court were fixed at six years, as at present. But by the terms of that instrument they were to be elected at such time and in such manner as might be provided by law. The election law (Gen. St. 1873, ch. 20, sec. 2) provided that "the judges of the supreme court shall be elected in the year 1878, and every six years thereafter." By this same statute state executive officers were to be elected in the year 1874, and every two years thereafter. Thus it will be seen that executive and judicial officers were elected at the same general election, and in even numbered years. Mindful of the conditions then existing, and of the laws then in force, may we not with reason attach some special significance to the provisions under consideration, incorporated, as they were, in the organic law framed and adopted in the year 1875?

4. Our discussion to this point has proceeded on the theory that the terms of office, as used in the provisions of the constitution quoted, when construed with reference to the correct meaning of that instrument in providing for the election, the time thereof, the terms of office, and the

succession of incumbents, are to be understood as the fixed and definite periods of time therein stated; and, if we are correct in this, then it must logically follow that the act in controversy is an unwarranted interference with the terms of office as thus provided for, and, contrary to well-settled principles, extends the terms of the present incumbents beyond the times as therein provided.

We are here met with the proposition that section 20, which says, "All officers provided for in this article shall hold their offices until their successors shall be qualified," etc., is to be construed as making the constitutional term of office the fixed and definite periods of six, four and two years, respectively, and in addition thereto the uncertain and indeterminate period of "until their successors are qualified." Consequently, it is argued the act in question violates none of the provisions relative to the length of the terms of the offices therein provided for. It is said the authorities are uniform as to this proposition. In a sense, they undoubtedly are, and, in another sense, the authorities are equally uniform to the point that the legal definition of the word term is the fixed and definite period of time stated in the law. It all depends on the viewpoint—on the nature of the question which is receiving judicial attention. These hold-over provisions in the law are generally understood to be for the purpose of having an incumbent in a public office at all times—to provide for the one holding an office to continue therein and to discharge the duties thereof until a successor, either by election or by appointment, is installed. In this sense, the officer continues to hold his office *de jure* in continuation, and as a part of the definite term and fixed period of time for which selected. But, in the sense of fixing tenures of office and providing for the duration thereof, and for the selection of a successor it cannot, we think, be said, in strict correctness, that the definition of the word term means the uncertain and indeterminate period which an incumbent may hold over his fixed term, because of some fortuitous circumstance

which has prevented his successor from qualifying at the time contemplated in the natural and ordinary course of events. This court has said: "Holding over beyond the fixed term of an officer pending the election of a successor in pursuance of the requirements of the constitution is as much a part of the term of office as that which precedes it." *State v. Moores*, 61 Neb. 9. In the sense in which used in the authority cited, the correctness of the proposition is indisputable. The constitutional provision is obviously to meet just such conditions, and to permit the incumbent to extend his fixed term until a successor is qualified. But, nevertheless, speaking with accuracy, there legally exist two tenures in the case cited, the fixed term and the hold-over term, and the time the incumbent holds the office beyond the fixed term is just so much an encroachment on the term of the successor. Ordinarily, say the authorities, the word "term" or "term of office" when used in reference to the tenure of office, means a fixed and definite period of time. *Crovatt v. Mason*, 101 Ga. 246, 28 S. E. 891; *State v. Breidenthal*, 55 Kan. 308, 40 Pac. 651; *State v. Tallman*, 25 Wash. 295, 64 Pac. 759; *People v. Brundage*, 78 N. Y. 403; *State v. Stonestreet*, 99 Mo. 361, 12 S. W. 895. In *State v. Stonestreet*, *supra*, it is said:

"Whether we take the phrase, 'term of office,' in its ordinary or popular sense, or in its technical import, it means one and the same thing—'a fixed and definite period of time.'"

In that case the decision was under a statute authorizing the appointment of an oil inspector for the term of two years, and which fixed the beginning and the ending of his term, and thereby determined the beginning and ending of the term of his successor, each holding for the term of two years. It was also provided that the officer should hold his office until his successor was appointed and qualified. It will be noticed, at once, that, in principle, the provisions of the statute there being considered and the constitutional provisions we are discussing are

analogous to a marked degree. It was in that case held, however, that the provisions for holding over until a successor qualified did not affect or alter the fixed and definite term of two years; the officer holding over being regarded as holding a part of his successor's term. It may here be mentioned that the almost universal holdings of the courts in passing on a question of this character are to the effect that the hold-over period of an incumbent under provisions for holding the office until a successor is qualified has the inevitable effect of encroaching on the term of the successor, and, to the extent of the period holding over, is a shortening of the term of such successor, so that, in contemplation of law, the terms of fixed periods of time follow one after the other in the passing of time, whether held by the predecessor in office under the provisions for holding over, or by the one installed at the beginning of the fixed and definite period for the full term. It is said in *Crovatt v. Mason, supra*:

"It is apparent that the provision 'or until his successor is elected and qualified' does not reduce or change the term for which the officer is elected, but the meaning of such phrase is to extend the time in which he may hold the office beyond his term to a period when the office is filled by another who has been elected and qualified."

Say the supreme court of Kansas in *State v. Breiden-thal, supra*:

"It is the opinion of the court that, as a 'term' means a fixed and definite period of time, the time definitely fixed in the law at four years is the term of office."

The term of office so fixed by the legislature was for four years, and until a successor was appointed and qualified. The constitution of that state provides that the legislature shall not create any office, the tenure of which shall be longer than four years.

State v. Tallman, supra, is relied on by both parties to the present controversy as authority in their favor. As we read the decision, it recognizes the term to be that fixed and definite period of time which the law prescribes that

an officer shall hold the office, and that a statute, which enables him to hold after his term has expired, does not change the term. It also holds to the proposition that, when the law making power assigns a stated period of time as the term of an officer, the fact that an officer is allowed to hold over does not change the length of his term, but merely results in shortening the time that his successor holds the office, although it does not affect the legal length of the succeeding term. It follows, we think, from a consideration of the authorities, and in sound reason, that the term of office, the tenure the lawmakers had in view, and which is contemplated by and designated in the provisions of the constitution to which reference has been made, is the fixed, certain and definite period of time therein specified, and not such fixed period, and in addition thereto the indeterminate period which is authorized to provide against contingencies of an accidental nature under the provisions of section 20, article VI, above quoted.

5. With the term of office of the officers named in the constitutional provisions quoted fixed and made definite and certain, the time of the beginning of such term and the termination thereof provided for, and with the time of the election for the first and subsequent terms stated in express terms, how stands the case and what is the effect of these several provisions on the act in controversy? The inevitable result of the act, if it be a valid one, is to extend the terms of all present incumbents of the offices provided for by such constitutional provision for one year, and to defer the time of the election of successors from the time of the general election, as heretofore held in the odd numbered years, to the next succeeding general election to be held in the even numbered years. The successors of the present incumbents, if we are correct in our definition of the words "term of office" as used in these several provisions, should, if they be given force and effect, be elected at a general election held in November, 1905, 1907 and 1909, respectively. By the terms of the

act under consideration, if it becomes operative, the electorate will be deprived of the privilege of choosing the successors of these several officers at the times stated; the incumbents holding over not being the choice of the voters, but under legislative authority creating a special and particular term in addition to the term fixed by the constitution.

In *State v. Thoman*, 10 Kan. 191, it is held that, as "the constitution of the state fixes the term of office of the judges of the district court at four years, and it is not in the power of the legislature to increase or extend that term either directly or indirectly," and that when the manifest purpose of the constitutional provisions are to secure not only a fixed term of office, but also to the people at stated intervals the opportunity of changing the incumbents, these provisions must prevail as the paramount law, over those expressed in the statute in conflict therewith. Says Brewer, J., writing the opinion of the court:

"The term of office is, as we have seen, four years. This being a constitutional provision is beyond legislative change. It is a fixed quantity." And again: "The manifest purpose of the constitutional provisions is to secure not merely a fixed term of office to judges, but also to the people at stated intervals the opportunity of changing the incumbents. * * * The constitutional provision is, that in each district 'there shall be elected by the electors thereof a district judge, who shall hold his office for the term of four years.' This does not apply to the first district judges alone, but establishes a permanent rule. It would seem a fair implication that such election should be held at the last general election prior to the commencement of such term. That would be consonant with the general rule governing all elections everywhere, and a constitution, as well as the statutes, must be construed in the light of settled and general usage."

In a very recent case (*Gemmer v. State*, 163 Ind. 150, 71 N. E. 478), the supreme court of Indiana, in passing on a statute deferring the time of the election of certain officers

for a year, and in which are raised many questions quite similar to those involved in a decision in the case at bar, hold that political privileges conferred on the people by the constitution are beyond legislative interference as effectually as if the constitution expressly provided that the people should not be deprived of them by any legislative enactment. Also, that a provision of the constitution to the effect that an officer shall hold his office until his successor is elected and qualified, being intended to prevent vacancies in public offices, does not confer on the legislature the power to postpone the election of a successor, and create a condition authorizing the incumbent to hold over. It is contended by counsel for respondent that the only question necessary to a decision in the case just cited was with reference to the power of the legislature to provide for the incumbent to hold office for more than four years in a period of six years, contrary to an express provision in the constitution limiting the term of any one incumbent to not more than four years in any period of six years. While it is true that the latter question may have been sufficient to dispose of the case then being considered, it is also clearly to be seen by a reading of the court's opinion that the discussion of the other questions to which we have adverted was elaborate and exhaustive, and that the conclusion reached was predicated in a large measure, if not exclusively, on the views entertained by the court relative to the questions of the same nature as those raised in the case at bar. The case is well reasoned, and appeals to us with much force as being sound in principle, and in accord with the letter and spirit of our own fundamental law, and we quote liberally from the opinion, wherein the court say:

"The office being constitutional and elective, the voters of the county are authorized to fill it at the first opportunity given under the constitution. This right cannot be taken away from them by the legislature, either directly or indirectly, by an act postponing the choice of the officers named until a general election at which they might

be elected has passed. When the framers of the constitution and the people who adopted it said in that instrument that 'there shall be elected in each county by the voters thereof, at the time of holding general elections,' the officers named, they could have meant nothing else than that the succession to these offices should be secured, without vacancies or unnecessary extensions of terms by holding over after the expiration of the constitutional terms, by the election by the voters of each county of successors to such officers, who would be ready to take the offices and discharge their duties immediately upon the expiration of the terms of the previous incumbents. The only natural and reasonable time for such selection would be at the general election next preceding the expiration of the term of the incumbent. If the power of the legislature to postpone the choice of the successors to the incumbents of these offices at such election is conceded, it follows that the time for the election of such successors rests wholly in the discretion of the general assembly. If this is the law, the control of the offices affected is taken from the people and resides exclusively in the legislature." And again: "The argument that the legislature may fix the time of the commencement of the terms of office, where that time is not fixed by the constitution itself, and that if the term of an incumbent is extended beyond the constitutional limit, the officer holds over by virtue of section 3 of article XV, constitution, which provides that an officer shall hold his office for the constitutional term, and until his successor is elected and qualified, is fallacious. The latter provision was intended to prevent vacancies in the public offices to which it applies. It cannot be understood to confer on the legislature the power to postpone unnecessarily the election of a successor to the office, and thereby create a condition authorizing the incumbent to hold over after the expiration of his term. The mischiefs which would result from this construction of the constitution and the recognition of this authority in the legislature are too evident to require discussion.

By the adoption of measures of this character the legislative department could appropriate to itself an extensive and dangerous power and influence over a great number of offices and officers."

We should not pass from this subject without referring to *State v. Hedlund*, 16 Neb. 566. In that case it appears that a statute providing for township organization contained the provision that county judges in such counties should be elected at the first general election after the adoption of township organization, and each second year thereafter. This, in the case cited, is construed to mean "the first general election at which the county officers named are to be elected," and it is held the general statute, which provided that county officers should be elected in the year 1879, and each second year thereafter, controlled and required the election of county judges under township organization to be held in the odd years. Quoting the constitutional provision relative to the term of county judges, the court then observes: "County judges were elected in October, 1875, and every second year thereafter until and including 1883. The legislature possesses no power to change the year in which such elections are to be held, nor shorten the term of office." It is apparent that this expression as to the effect of the constitutional provision relative to the tenure of office of county judges was given as another reason for construing the statute as the court in that case did. It seems to be conceded by counsel for respondent that this opinion of our own court is opposed to their construction of the constitution, but it is argued that, in so far as the case may be said to be against them, it is merely dictum and without binding force. The language used can hardly be regarded as wholly dictum for the reason above stated. It appears to be the deliberate expression of the court, and, so far as we can observe, a correct construction of the constitutional provision there under consideration.

Chief reliance for authority in support of the validity of the act of the legislature being considered is placed by

counsel for respondent on a recent decision of the supreme court of Kansas in the case of *Pruitt v. Squires*, 64 Kan. 855, 68 Pac. 643. There is found in that opinion, it is to be frankly stated, much that seems to support the construction of the act in question contended for by the respondent. The two cases may, however, be distinguished in their more marked characteristics. It may also be said the decision in the Kansas case was by a divided court, two of the judges dissenting. The Kansas constitution provides: "All county officers shall hold their offices for the term of two years, and until their successors shall be qualified * * * but no person shall hold the office of sheriff or county treasurer for more than two consecutive terms." It was this provision only the court was construing. The election law there under consideration postponed the time of election of these officers from 1901 to 1902, but made no provisions for filling the interregnum thus created. The court held, first, that the provisions for holding over applied to the second as well as the first term of the officers named, and that such holding over was a part of the second term; secondly, that there was no vacancy created by the legislative enactment postponing the election, and the governor was not authorized to appoint as though a vacancy existed; and, thirdly, no means of supplying such offices during the interregnum having been designated, such incumbents would continue to hold until their successors chosen in the usual manner had qualified. The questions thus presented and decided in that case differ from those in the case at bar in this: the constitution of that state does not designate the time when the term of office should begin and the time when it should end, but only provides that county officers shall hold their offices for the term of two years, and until their successors should be qualified, with the added provision that sheriffs and treasurers shall not hold for more than two consecutive terms. Our constitution provides expressly when the terms of judges of the supreme court and of regents of the university shall begin and when they shall end, and that

they shall continue for six years. The act of the legislature of this state providing for biennial elections attempts to break in upon this continuity of terms, but there is no such objection to the Kansas statute. If our constitution fixes the terms of these officers, and provides for a continuity of terms, so that when one officer holds over his term, he thereby holds a part of the term of his successor, then the question with us is, can the legislature change the arrangement, and provide a different time for the beginning and ending of the terms, and that the terms of the present incumbents shall be changed by adding a definite period thereto? Speaking generally as to the meaning of provisions for holding over, or for an indeterminate period, it can hardly be doubted that, even if it is beyond the power of the legislature, rightfully, to prevent an election at the time it should be held in conformity with constitutional provision, yet, if a failure of an election should happen, or if for any other reason no person was authorized to succeed to the office, under the provisions of the constitution, section 20, article XVI, the incumbent officers would hold over until successors were legally chosen. There is, however, no occasion, nor, as it appears to us, sound reason, for giving this section an enlarged meaning beyond this.

6. It is argued by respondents that, because the provisions of the constitution relative to the holding of general elections for judicial officers are found in article XVI, called the "Schedule," such provisions should be regarded as having been inserted for temporary purposes only, and without permanency of character. These provisions, it is said, are to be held merely as temporary expedients, necessary for the time being, in bridging over the break between the old and the new order of things. The reason for the creation of the "Schedule" is, it is suggested, made manifest in its introductory, wherein it is stated: "That no inconvenience may arise from the revisions and changes made in the constitution of this state, and to carry the same into effect it is hereby ordained and declared." It

may be, and probably is, true that a schedule proper, or that part of an organic law devoted exclusively to provisions for the transition of the affairs of government from the existing order of things to the conditions arising under the operation of the new instrument, should be regarded as of a temporary character and to be ignored when its purposes have been subserved. It is, however, quite manifest that the article which is denominated as the "Schedule" in our constitution contains many provisions of as lasting and permanent character as those found in other portions of the document, and is obviously so intended by its framers and the people adopting it. In fact, the instrument could be regarded only as a very imperfect one, leaving to the legislature the exercise of many powers usually controlled by the fundamental law, if these provisions are construed as having been incorporated for temporary purposes only. If counsel's contention in this regard be correct, then the legislature is authorized to change the time of holding general elections to any date it may so decree, since the provision regulating the time of holding elections is found in the schedule. This construction, however, it is manifest, cannot be entertained nor scarcely thought of. The same may be said of many other provisions found therein of the same undoubted permanent character. The language used should be given its ordinary meaning, and whether a provision is intended to be of a temporary or permanent character must be determined from the purpose of the enactment and the object sought to be accomplished thereby. "The most universal and effectual way of discovering the true meaning of a law, when the words are dubious, is by considering the *reason* and *spirit* of it, or the cause which moved the legislator to enact it." 1 Blackstone's Commentaries (Chitty's), 61. So construing the provisions of the constitution we have been considering, we have no hesitancy in saying that they are and should be held as being of a lasting character, even though found in an article denominated a "Schedule."

7. Finally, it is argued that the court should give great weight to the legislative construction of the constitution, when legislation is had regarding subjects of a political nature. The rule contended for seems to be sound and reasonable, and, although we accord to it all the force contended for, we cannot escape the conclusion that the provisions of the fundamental law we have been considering will not bear a construction permitting or authorizing the legislature to change, as it has attempted to do, the time of holding elections for judicial officers, and the time when their respective terms of office shall begin and terminate, and to extend the terms of all present incumbents for one year, in the face of such provisions. The conflict is so palpable that the legislative enactment must give way. The action of the legislative branch of government is entitled to and should receive from the judicial department the greatest of respect and deference. This has been freely accorded and ever kept in mind in the consideration and discussion of the case at bar. The court should and does approach a conclusion resulting in a holding that the law is unconstitutional with great caution and hesitancy. The wisdom, policy and expediency of the law have not been allowed, that we are conscious of, to, in the slightest degree, influence our decision. We have endeavored to keep within the legitimate sphere of action belonging to the judiciary and, in so far as human fallibility permits, to reach a conclusion from a strictly legal and judicial standpoint. The final and ultimate construction of the provisions of the constitution is by that instrument entrusted to the courts. We have endeavored to discharge the trust thus reposed in the tribunal over which we for a time give expression to its utterances and decrees according to the meaning expressed or arising by necessary implication. In so doing, we are unable to escape the conclusion that the legislative enactment in controversy conflicts with several of the provisions of the fundamental law, and that the former must give way and be declared without legal force, inoperative and void.

Prante v. Lompe.

It follows that the writ must issue as prayed, and it is, accordingly, so ordered.

WRIT ALLOWED.

WILLIAM PRANTE, GUARDIAN, v. OSCAR LOMPE, GUARDIAN.

FILED JUNE 22, 1905. No. 14,298.

ERROR to the district court for Nemaha county: WILLIAM H. KELLIGAR, JUDGE. *Application for supersedeas denied.*

H. A. Lambert and C. O. French, for plaintiff in error.

E. Ferneau, Stull & Hawaby and W. F. Buck, contra.

SEDGWICK, J.

Upon application for that purpose the county court of Nemaha county made an order appointing a guardian for Harman Ray, as an incompetent person, and upon proceedings in error in the district court for that county this order was reversed and the cause was set down for trial in the district court. The parties interested, desiring to prosecute proceedings in error in this court to reverse the order of the district court, applied to that court for a supersedeas of its order, which was refused; and the cause having been docketed in this court upon proceedings in error, application is made to this court for a supersedeas of the judgment of the district court. It is, of course, within the discretion of the district court to determine whether a supersedeas should be allowed. But this is a legal discretion, and where such supersedeas is refused, this court will in a proper case supersede the judgment of the district court upon proper terms. With this in view we have examined the record presented, and are satisfied that the district court properly exercised its discretion.

When the judgment of the county court was reversed, and the cause set down for trial in the district court, the latter court became possessed of the cause, and application may be made to that court for such orders upon the parties interested as may be necessary to protect the property involved and the rights of all of the parties. The decision of the district court will, of course, be presumed to be correct until, upon the record, it is found to be otherwise, and this cannot be determined in this court before a final hearing. In the meantime the judgment of the district court is in full force, and there is no necessity for a supersedeas. The application is therefore

OVERRULED.

LANCASTER COUNTY ET AL. V. STATE OF NEBRASKA.*

FILED JUNE 22, 1905. No. 13,868.

1. **Claims Against State: FILING.** A creditor of the state, where the law makes no provision for the payment of his claim, is not required to file such claim within two years after its accrual with the auditor of public accounts for adjustment and allowance, and his failure to so file it will not bar an action thereon against the state. *State v. Moore*, 40 Neb. 854, followed.
2. **Action.** A resolution of the state senate, passed in accordance with the provisions of section 1106 of the code, will authorize the claimant to commence and maintain an action against the state on such a claim.
3. **Petition examined, and held** sufficient to resist a general demurrer.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: **EDWARD P. HOLMES, JUDGE.** *Reversed.*

James L. Caldwell, Frank M. Tyrrell and Charles E. Matson, for plaintiffs in error.

F. N. Prout, Attorney General, and Norris Brown, *contra.*

* Rehearing allowed. See opinion, p. 215, *post*.

BARNES, J.

On the 26th day of June, 1903, the plaintiffs commenced this action against the state in the district court for Lancaster county, and thereafter filed their amended petition, from which we gather the following facts: On or about the 26th day of January, 1893, the treasurer of Lancaster county collected, and deposited in the Capital National Bank of Lincoln, Nebraska, an authorized county depository, the sum of \$35,694.54 of public moneys. On that date the bank failed, and of the money thus deposited there was lost, absolutely, the sum of \$32,919.32; \$5,000.40 of this money was state funds. On the 31st day of January, 1894, the county treasurer of said county paid to the state treasurer the full amount of the state's funds so lost by the bank failure, thus reimbursing the defendant; and it was alleged that such payment was made without the consent of the county, without any authority from its board of commissioners, and by inadvertence and mistake. It was also alleged in the petition that the sum so paid to the state constituted a just obligation owing from the defendant to Lancaster county at the time of the bringing of this action. It was further alleged that on the 4th day of April, 1903, the state senate passed a resolution authorizing the bringing of this action for the accounts and items sued on. The petition concluded with a prayer for an accounting, and a judgment against the defendant and in favor of the plaintiffs for such sum as might be found due, together with interest at 7 per cent. thereon from the 31st day of January, 1903. The state demurred to the amended petition, and the demurrer was sustained for two reasons: First, that it was shown on the face of the petition that the cause of action was barred by the statute of limitations; second, that the petition did not state facts sufficient to constitute a cause of action. The plaintiffs elected to stand on their amended petition, the action was dismissed, and is brought here by petition in error.

The plaintiffs contend that the trial court erred in holding that their claim was barred by the limitation contained in section 6, article III, chapter 83, Compiled Statutes 1903 (Ann. St. 9094). It would seem that this contention is not well founded. In *State v. Moore*, 40 Neb. 854, 25 L. R. A. 744, the court referred to that section, quoted section 9, article IX of the constitution, and said:

"Now, what is meant in this constitutional provision by 'claims upon the treasury' which the auditor must examine and adjust? We take it that it means claims which the state is or may be under legal obligation to pay, such as the salaries of its officers and employees, the cost of erecting buildings, and the expense attendant upon the maintenance of its prisons, asylums, schools, and other institutions."

This is in harmony with many other decisions of our court in which it is held that statutes providing for the presenting of claims to county or city authorities apply only to claims arising from contract or some direct legal obligation, and not claims arising from tort. It is only in those claims that are properly presented to the auditor, and that he is authorized to allow, that appeals provided for by the constitution and by statute can be taken. The claim involved in the case at bar could not be brought into court in that way. The law makes no provision for the payment of such a claim, and it is not included in the provisions of the statute or the constitution above mentioned. It must be brought into court by consent of the legislature. If it is not necessary under the statute that such claims as this should be presented to the auditor at all, then, of course, the two years' limitation contained in section 6, *supra*, does not apply. The statute of limitations as a defense is a personal one, and may be waived, even if the claim has been barred by statute. The state might waive that defense and authorize this suit, and we think by its action in this case it has done so. When this claim was presented to the legislature and leave to sue was asked for, more than two years had already run, which would

have furnished a sufficient excuse to the legislature to refuse leave to sue. It, nevertheless, by the action of the senate, granted such leave, and this was a waiver of the bar of the statute, if such bar existed. Section 22, article VI, of the constitution, provides: "The state may sue and be sued, and the legislature shall provide by law in what manner and in what courts suit shall be brought." And the legislature, exercising the authority thus conferred, has provided by section 1106 of the code: "The several district courts of the judicial districts of the state as now provided for and established by the constitution of the state, and of such judicial districts as may hereafter be provided by law, shall have jurisdiction to hear and determine the following matters: *First*. All claims against the state filed therein, which have previously been presented to the auditor of public accounts, and have been in whole or in part rejected or disallowed. *Second*. All claims or petitions for relief that may be presented to the legislature, and which may be by any law, or by any rule or resolution of the legislature, or either house thereof, referred to either of said courts for adjudication." Therefore the resolution of the senate, set forth in the amended petition, constitutes ample authority for the prosecution of this action.

It is claimed on the part of the state that there is a misjoinder of parties plaintiff, but this question is one which cannot be raised by demurrer, so that point requires no further consideration.

Considering now the merits of the case as presented by the amended petition, it appears that the county treasurer of Lancaster county paid to the state certain money belonging to the county, without any authority therefor, and such payment was made by inadvertence and mistake. If these allegations are true, they state a cause of action, and are sufficient to resist a general demurrer. This fact seems to be conceded by the state, for the only defense presented by the brief and argument of the attorney general is the limitation contained in the statute above men-

tioned. We are therefore of the opinion that the trial court erred in sustaining the demurrer and dismissing the plaintiff's cause of action.

For the foregoing reasons, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

REVERSED.

HOLCOMB, C. J., concurs in the order of reversal.

The following opinion on rehearing was filed April 5, 1906. *Judgment of reversal adhered to:*

1. **Claims Against State: LIMITATION OF ACTIONS.** If one having a claim against the state cannot prosecute the same without leave of the legislature or one branch thereof, the statute of limitations will not begin to run against an action on such claim until such leave to sue the state has been given.
2. **State taxes in the hands of a county treasurer are the property of the state, and, if lost without fault of the county, the county is not liable to the state therefor.**
3. **State Funds: DEPOSITORY: ESTOPPEL.** If money belonging to the state in the hands of a county treasurer is by him deposited in a bank that has been designated as a depository of county funds, and is lost by a failure of the bank, it is not the duty of the treasurer to use the money of the county to make good the loss to the state, and his action in doing so without authority from the county board will not estop the county to recover the money from the state.

SEDGWICK, C. J.

In the original brief of the state which was considered upon the former hearing, it was contended that the action was barred by the limitations contained in section 6, article III, chapter 83, Compiled Statutes, 1903 (Ann. St. 9094), which provides that persons having claims against the state shall exhibit the same to the auditor within two years after such claims shall accrue. It was not contended that the general statute of limitations applies. In answer to this argument on behalf of the state, it was said in the

opinion that, by the resolution of the senate authorizing a suit directly against the state upon this claim, the objection that the limitation of section 6 applies was waived by the state. It was not intended to pass upon the question whether the general statute of limitations would, necessarily, be waived by the authority given to sue the state under the resolution of the senate, without language in the resolution which expressly or impliedly waived that defense.

1. It is now contended that the general statute of limitations applies, and that the resolution of the senate is not a waiver of this defense. Upon this contention several authorities are cited. Among them is *Hepburn's Case*, 3 Bland (Md.), 95, 109. Hepburn was a creditor of William and Robert Mollison. The property of the Mollisons had been confiscated and sold by the state, and Hepburn's contention was that, by this confiscation and sale, he was prevented from realizing upon his claim against the Mollisons. The statute of limitations had run upon his claim against the Mollisons, and the chancellor held "that there is sufficient evidence to show that this debt * * * has been long since paid and satisfied by the Mollisons themselves." And the chancellor further said (p. 125): "The great lapse of time since it became due, without the delay being in any manner reasonably accounted for, gives rise to a presumption, altogether irresistible, that it must have been, in some way or other, fully and completely paid and satisfied." There is no suggestion in the opinion of the chancellor that there would be any presumption that the state had paid this claim to Hepburn. In the case at bar the delay in bringing the action is reasonably accounted for. It could not be brought without leave of the state, and it was brought within three months after such leave was obtained. Another case cited and relied upon is *Barter v. State*, 10 Wis. *454. In that case the action was authorized by a general statute, which had been in force, and under which the plaintiff might have sued at any time after the claim accrued. This right of action had

existed for sufficient length of time to bar the claim under the general statute of limitations, and the sole question was whether, in any case, under any circumstances, the state could avail itself of the defense of the statute of limitations. After discussing and disposing of this question the court said: "The statute, of course, did not run until the state rendered itself liable to a suit on any claim. But as that statute had been in force more than six years before the commencement of this suit, we think the claim is barred." The statute of limitations does not generally run upon a claim while no right of action exists thereon, and, under that rule, the statute has no application to this case.

2. It is next contended in the brief of the state that payment of money justly due cannot be recovered back on account of mistake. This leads to a consideration of the question whether this money was justly due the state from the county. It was not within the province of the treasurer to determine this question. The fact that the treasurer had paid over the money to the state without any authority from the county board ought not to prejudice the legal rights of the county; so that the question is whether the loss of this money should fall upon the state or upon the county. It must be remembered that this question is being determined upon the allegations of the petition alone. The case is now presented to this court upon a general demurrer, which raises only the question of the sufficiency of the petition. Under these allegations we think that the money lost was the loss of the state, and that the county was not liable therefor to the state. In *County of Valley v. Robinson*, 32 Neb. 254, it was said: "The county is charged with the levy and collection of all county and state taxes, and until state taxes are paid they remain a subsisting charge against the county." The action was brought by the county against the treasurer and his bondsmen to recover taxes collected by him for the state. The question was whether the county had sufficient interest in the collection of these

taxes to maintain the action. The question presented in this case was not before the court, and the language there used was not used with reference to the question being here considered. In what sense the county is charged with the state's taxes until they are paid into the state's treasury is not made clear in that decision. The county was the obligee named in the bond upon which the action was brought, and the holding that the action might be brought in the name of the county to recover the state's taxes that have been misappropriated by the treasurer does not go so far as to hold that the county itself is an insurer of the state's funds in the hands of the treasurer, and, if unable to recover them from the treasurer, could be held liable to the state therefor. Judge MAXWELL in the opinion said: "The question here involved was before this court in *Albertson v. State*, 9 Neb. 429, and *Thorne v. Adams County*, 22 Neb. 825." In both of these cases it was held that an action could be maintained by the county against the treasurer for all such funds in respect to which he is the defaulter. In the former case the second paragraph of the syllabus is: "Section 32 of the code of civil procedure authorizes an action upon an official bond in favor of the *public*, where there are no special provisions to the contrary, in the name of the obligee of the bond." *School District v. Saline County*, 9 Neb. 403, was an action by the school district to recover from the county money in the hands of the county treasurer belonging to the district. In the opinion it is said that it is the duty of the county treasurer, when funds belonging to the school district come into his hands, "to credit them to the proper district, and on proper application pay them over to the officer of the district entitled to receive them from his hands. With the management of this business the county commissioners have no voice whatever. They cannot control, nor is the county in any-wise answerable for, the acts of the treasurer, either committed or omitted, in respect of these duties. If the county treasurer has misappropriated moneys belonging to the

plaintiff, he and his sureties may be liable in a proper action on his bond; but the county very clearly is not liable therefor." This language appears to apply as well to the duties of the county treasurer in respect to the state funds; and upon the same reasoning the county would not be liable to the state for its funds in the hands of the county treasurer. While under the decisions above referred to an action may be brought in the name of the county against the treasurer to recover funds of the state misappropriated by him, the state auditor is expressly authorized by statute to bring such suit. Laws 1879, p. 343 (Comp. St. 1903, ch. 77, art. I, secs. 184, 187; Ann. St. 10583, 10586). Section 186 provides: "The bond of every county treasurer shall be held to be security for the payment by such treasurer to the state treasurer and the several cities, towns, villages and the proper authorities and persons respectively, of all taxes and special assessments which may be collected or received by him on their behalf, by virtue of any law in force at the time of giving such bond, or that may be passed or take effect thereafter." Under these provisions of the statute it is manifest that the liability of the county for state funds in the hands of the county treasurer is no greater than its liability for other funds not belonging to the county, and *School District v. Saline County*, *supra*, is decisive of the question here involved.

For these reasons, our former judgment upon this demurrer is adhered to.

JUDGMENT ACCORDINGLY.

PHILIP HUBERT V. STATE OF NEBRASKA.*

FILED JUNE 22, 1905. No. 14,096.

1. **Rape.** Sections 11 and 12 of the criminal code describe three classes of crimes, each of which is totally distinct from the other two. By section 11 it is declared to be unlawful for any person to have carnal knowledge of his daughter or sister forcibly and against her will. By the first clause of section 12 the act of having forcible carnal knowledge of any woman or female child, other than a daughter or sister, is denounced as a crime; and by the second clause sexual intercourse with a female child under the age of eighteen years, without force and with her consent, is forbidden.
2. **An information for the crime of rape under the first clause of section 12 must charge that the act was done with force and against the will or consent of the prosecutrix.**
3. **An information for the crime of rape under the second clause of said section must charge the person upon whom the offense was committed as being a female child under eighteen years of age, and the accused as being a male person of the age of eighteen years or over; and, in case the prosecutrix is over fifteen years of age, her previous chastity must be alleged.**
4. **Evidence.** The state, on the trial of such a case, should not be permitted to introduce evidence of acts of the accused, and statements alleged to have been made by him, which do not tend to corroborate the evidence of the prosecutrix, or impeach or discredit his own testimony.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: EDWARD P. HOLMES, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

Billingsley & Greene and R. H. Haglin, for plaintiff in error.

Norris Brown, Attorney General, and W. T. Thompson, contra.

BARNES, J.

Philip Hubert, who will hereafter be called the plaintiff, was convicted in the district court for Lancaster county

* Rehearing denied. See opinion, page 226, *post*.

of the crime of statutory rape, and from a judgment sentencing him to be confined in the state penitentiary for the period of six years he prosecutes error.

The information on which he was tried, omitting the formal parts, reads as follows: "That Philip Hubert, late of the county aforesaid, on the 4th day of August, A. D. 1904, in the county of Lancaster and state of Nebraska, aforesaid, then and there being, did feloniously and unlawfully in and upon one Lilian Harding, a female child under the age of eighteen years, to wit, the age of fifteen years, and previously of chaste character, then and there being, feloniously did make an assault, and her the said Lilian Harding, then and there wickedly, unlawfully and feloniously did carnally know and abuse." Plaintiff first filed a motion to quash the information; later on demurred to it; thereafter objected to the introduction of any evidence on the part of the state because, as he alleged, the information did not state facts sufficient to constitute a crime; and after conviction, before sentence, he filed a motion in arrest of judgment for the same reason. So it appears that at the outset he objected to the sufficiency of the information, and has at all times kept his objection good. His first contention now is that the information is not sufficient to charge him with the crime of which he was convicted. As counsel for both the plaintiff and the state have given this question the most attention, we will, at the outset, give it our careful consideration.

Section 11 of the criminal code provides: "If any person shall have carnal knowledge of his daughter or sister, forcibly and against her will, every such person so offending shall be deemed guilty of a rape, and shall be imprisoned in the penitentiary during life." The plaintiff was not prosecuted under this section, therefore it will receive no further consideration, and is quoted only for the purpose of being referred to in the discussion which follows. Section 12 of the criminal code reads as follows: "If any person shall have carnal knowledge of any other woman or female child, than his daughter or sister, as

aforesaid, forcibly and against her will; or if any male person, of the age of eighteen years or upwards, shall carnally know or abuse any female child under the age of eighteen years, with her consent, unless such female child so known and abused is over fifteen years of age and previously unchaste, every such person so offending shall be deemed guilty of a rape, and shall be imprisoned in the penitentiary not more than 20 or less than 3 years." From an examination of the sections quoted it is apparent that they describe three classes of crimes, each of which is totally distinct from the other two. The first clause of section 12 describes what is usually called the common law crime of rape. By this clause it is provided that any male person who shall have carnal knowledge of any woman or female child, other than his daughter or sister, forcibly and against her will, is guilty of the crime of rape. In an information for this offense it is not necessary to state the age of the accused. If he has the capacity to commit the crime his age is wholly immaterial, and so is the age of his victim. But it is always necessary in a prosecution under this clause of the statute to allege and prove that the act was committed forcibly and against the will of the prosecutrix. *Garrison v. People*, 6 Neb. 274; *Hall v. State*, 40 Neb. 320. The crime is made a statutory offense in this state, and the language of the information must conform, substantially at least, to that found in the statute. Judge MAXWELL in his Criminal Procedure, p. 238, says: "Rape is the carnal knowledge of a female forcibly and against her will." This definition applies particularly to the crime defined in the first clause of section 12. It will be observed that it is nowhere charged in the information that the plaintiff had carnal knowledge of the prosecutrix *forcibly and against her will*. So it is perfectly apparent that the language used therein is not sufficient to charge the plaintiff with the crime defined in the first clause of that section.

The second clause of section 12 provides that, if any male person of the age of eighteen years or upwards shall

carnally know or abuse any female child under the age of eighteen years, with her consent, unless such female child so known and abused is over fifteen years of age, and previously unchaste, every person so offending shall be deemed guilty of a rape. Now the essential elements of this charge are: First, that the accused is a male person of the age of eighteen years and upwards; second, that he shall carnally know and abuse a female child under the age of eighteen years; third, that such abuse shall be with her consent. If, however, she is over fifteen and under eighteen years of age, and previously unchaste, then carnal knowledge of her with her consent does not constitute the crime of rape. It is equally clear that, if the accused is less than eighteen years of age, the offense described in this clause of the statute cannot be committed by him. The state, nevertheless, contends that the statute describes but one offense; that the age of the accused is immaterial, and that it is not necessary to charge and prove that he had carnal knowledge of the prosecutrix *forcibly and against her will*. To support this contention several sections of Bishop's New Criminal Procedure, and cases from other states, are cited. An examination of these authorities discloses that they are based on statutes somewhat different from our own. As a matter of fact the decisions of each state conform to the definition of the crime set forth in its own statutes, and for this reason the authorities relied on by the state are of very little assistance in determining the sufficiency of the information in question herein. Sections 11 and 12 of our criminal code are almost literal copies of the sections of the Ohio statute defining the crime of rape. The supreme court of that state, in *Howard v. State*, 11 Ohio St. 328, said:

"The crime of a person in having 'carnal knowledge of his daughter or sister, forcibly and against her will,' as defined in the 4th section of the act of March 7, 1835 (Swan & Critchfield's Stat. 404), and the crime of a person in having 'carnal knowledge of any *other* woman or female child than his daughter or sister, as aforesaid, for-

cibly and against her will,' as defined in the 5th section of said act, are distinct and separate offenses, and not merely different grades of the same crime. In charging the latter crime, it is essential for the indictment to state that the woman or female child upon whom the crime is charged to have been committed is not the daughter or sister of the accused."

In construing our own statutes on this question it was said by Chief Justice SULLIVAN in *Edwards v. State*, 69 Neb. 386:

"Sections 11 and 12 of the criminal code describe three classes of crimes, each of which is totally distinct from the other two. By section 11 it is declared to be unlawful for any person to have carnal knowledge of his daughter or sister forcibly and against her will. By the first clause of section 12 the act of having forcible carnal knowledge of any woman or female child, other than a daughter or sister, is denounced as a crime; and by the second clause sexual intercourse with a female child under the age of eighteen years, without force and with her consent, is forbidden. The act charged in the information does not constitute a violation of section 11 nor of the first clause of section 12, because the elements of force and nonconsent are wanting."

We are satisfied with the language above quoted, and believe it is a correct statement of the effect of our statutes. So the contention of the state that our statutes describe but one offense, and the facts charged in the information, when viewed in that light, are sufficient to charge the plaintiff with the crime of statutory rape, must fail. In *Hall v. State*, *supra*, we said:

"In case it is not averred the act was done with force and against the consent of the prosecutrix, it is essential the information disclose that the person upon whom the offense was committed, at the time of the assault, was under fifteen years of age, and that the accused was of the age of eighteen years or over. An information for the crime of rape under the second clause of the section must

charge that the person upon whom the offense was committed as being a female child under fifteen years of age, and the accused as being a male person of the age of eighteen years or over; but where the unlawful intercourse is had forcibly and against the will of the complainant, the prosecution for the offense should be brought under the first part, or clause, of section 12, copied above, and in which case it is unnecessary that the information should disclose the age of the accused, or that of the prosecutrix."

Again, in *Woodruff v. State*, 72 Neb. 818, a case of statutory rape, Chief Justice HOLCOMB, speaking for the court, said:

"The gravamen of the offense charged under the section defining the crime is the unlawful sexual intercourse by a male person over 18 years of age with a female child under the age of consent. In the case at bar, the prosecutrix being over 15 years of age, her alleged previous chastity was put in issue, and evidence was introduced for the purpose of showing she was previously unchaste and as a complete defense to the crime charged."

If the previous unchastity of the prosecutrix is a complete defense to a charge of statutory rape, it necessarily follows that the fact that the accused is a male person under the age of eighteen years also constitutes a defense to such a charge. So, notwithstanding what the courts in other jurisdictions have held, we are fairly and fully committed to the rules above stated, and no reasons have been given which require us to change them. Judged by these rules, the trial court erred in overruling the plaintiff's objections to the information.

While we decline to formally consider plaintiff's other assignments of error, it is proper for us to say that, as we read the record, the evidence is insufficient to establish the offense described in the second clause of section 12. The prosecutrix testified positively that the plaintiff accomplished his purpose by force and against her will; that she never consented to the act of sexual intercourse with him; and he testified just as positively that he never had

sexual intercourse with her at any time, in any manner, or under any circumstance whatever.

It also appears that the state was permitted to introduce evidence of certain acts of the plaintiff, such as the purchase of two cocktails for the officer who arrested him, and certain statements alleged to have been made by him to that officer, none of which corroborated or even tended to corroborate the evidence of the prosecutrix, or impeach or discredit his own testimony. That this evidence, to which he objected, was prejudicial to him, and an invasion of his right to have a fair trial, can hardly be questioned. As has been often said, the charge of rape is one easily made, and hard to be defended against. Therefore it is the duty of the courts to carefully guard both the rights of the state and the accused, and see to it that a defendant shall not be convicted by reason of prejudice, and without sufficient competent evidence.

For the foregoing reasons, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings according to law.

REVERSED.

The following opinion on motion for rehearing was filed February 8, 1906. *Motion overruled:*

1. **Rape.** Section 12 of the criminal code, as amended, defines but one crime and prescribes the punishment therefor. The first paragraph of the syllabus of the former opinion in this case, holding that this section defines more than one distinct offense, is disapproved.
2. ———: **INFORMATION.** If a man eighteen years of age or upwards is guilty of the sexual act with a female child not over the age of fifteen years, or with a female child under the age of eighteen years and not previously unchaste, the law will presume, without further allegation or proof, that the act was done "forcibly and against her will." But it is only when the accused is of the specified age that this presumption exists. An information for rape must allege either that the act was done forcibly and against the will of the "woman or female child," or that the accused was of the age of eighteen years or upwards.

SEDGWICK, C. J.

The attorney general, in behalf of the state, has filed a motion for rehearing in this case, and has urged upon the attention of the court, among other things, two unusually important questions.

1. The first contention is that the court erred in holding that section 12 of the statute under consideration describes two classes of crimes, each of which is totally distinct from the other. The law applicable to this question we think is correctly stated in *United States v. Fero*, 18 Fed. 901:

"Where a statute makes either of two or more distinct acts connected with the same general offense, and subject to the same measure and kind of punishment, indictable separately and as distinct crimes when committed by different persons, or at different times, they may, when committed by the same person at the same time, be coupled in one count as constituting one offense."

It will be readily seen that the question is of importance in the construction of this statute. If two distinct offenses are defined and punishment provided for in this section, and neither of the two offenses includes the other, then the prosecutor must elect at his peril whether he will charge that the act was committed forcibly and against the will of the woman assaulted, or that the woman was under the statutory age and the defendant was of sufficient age to bring him within the provisions of the law. Both of these charges could not be contained in the same count of the information, nor indeed in the same information. If this section of the statute defines but one offense, and prescribes the punishment therefor, then the information may be so drawn as to support a conviction if the offense has been committed in any one of the ways defined in the statute. We think the latter construction should be given to this section. The object of the section is to define the crime of rape, and to provide the punishment therefor. At the common law it was necessary to charge

that the act of intercourse was accompanied with force on the part of the defendant, and was against the will of the woman assaulted. Force was an essential element of the crime. By the first clause of this section this element of the common law crime of rape is retained. By the second clause it is provided that the crime is established without proof of force under certain conditions. If the female consents to the act it is not rape, but this clause of the statute provides that if she is under the age of fifteen years she cannot consent, or if she is under the age of eighteen years and not previously unchaste she cannot consent, and so the whole section defines the common law crime of rape, with the condition that, when the accused has reached a certain age, and the female is of such tender years as to be presumed not to understand the nature of the act so as to enable her to consent to it, these elements take the place of the proof required by the common law that the act was with force and against her will. If these conditions obtain, the law presumes that the act was with force and violence, and against the will of the child assaulted. Section 12 then is within the rule above quoted from *United States v. Fero*, and defines but one crime, and provides but one punishment therefor. If the act which is made the gravamen of the offense is with force and against the will of the victim, or if the other conditions exist so that the law presumes it to be so done, then the crime is rape. The language quoted in our former opinion from *Edwards v. State*, 69 Neb. 386, was not necessary to the point there being considered, and the case must not be regarded as a precedent upon this point. We think therefore that the first paragraph of the syllabus of our former opinion in this case is erroneous.

2. The second important contention in the brief upon the motion for rehearing is that it is not necessary in an information for rape to charge either that the crime was committed forcibly and against the will of the female assaulted, or that the defendant was at the time of the

commission of the crime of the age of eighteen years or upwards. We do not think that this point is well taken. As before stated, an essential element of the crime of rape is force and violence. The derivation of the word itself indicates that meaning, and we think that in all cases an information charging the crime of rape must allege force and violence, and that it was against the will of the female assaulted, unless it is made by the information itself to appear that the conditions existed from which the law will conclusively presume such force and violence and non-consent. The element of force and violence and non-consent of the female assaulted is of such importance in a charge of the crime of rape that it cannot be wholly omitted. For this reason, and because of the weakness of the evidence referred to in our former opinion, the motion for rehearing is

OVERRULED.

CAROLINE WEATHERFORD V. UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD
COMPANY.

FILED JUNE 22, 1905. No. 13,434.

1. **Forcible Entry and Detainer: LIMITATION OF ACTIONS.** A grantee of real estate occupied by a third person acquires no greater rights against the occupier than his grantor had. If the right to bring an action of forcible entry and detention is barred as against the grantor, so likewise is it as against the grantee.
2. **Point Disapproved.** Paragraph 3 of syllabus in the former opinion, 5 Neb. (Unof.) 464, disapproved.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: WIL-
LARD W. SLABAUGH, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

I. J. Dunn, for plaintiff in error.

John N. Baldwin and *Edson Rich*, *contra.*

LETTON, C.

The former opinion in this case was not officially reported, but may be found in 5 Neb. (Unof.) 464. A rehearing was granted for further consideration of the contention of plaintiff in error that an action of forcible entry and detainer was barred by section 8 of the code. The facts in the record necessary to a determination of this question are: That the defendant in the court below had been in possession as a squatter on a portion of one of the streets of the city of Omaha for about six years prior to the amendment of section 6 of the code in 1899; that subsequent to this amendment the city of Omaha conveyed the portion of the street in controversy by deed to the plaintiff, Union Pacific Railroad Company; that, after the receipt of the deed by the plaintiff from the city, it served in writing on the defendant a three days' notice to quit, which substantially complied with the provisions of section 1022 of the code. In about thirty days after the service of this notice, plaintiff below commenced its action against the defendant in forcible entry and detainer. The contention of plaintiff in error and defendant below is that the right to maintain the action of forcible entry and detainer accrued to the city of Omaha immediately on defendant's taking unlawful possession of the portion of the street in controversy, and that, as more than one year has elapsed since this right of action accrued to the city, it is barred by the provisions of section 8, *supra*, from maintaining this form of action, and that the railroad company by its deed from the city could take no greater right than the city had against the intruding defendant.

We believe that plaintiff in error is right in her contention that the grantee stands in the shoes of the grantor, and has acquired only such rights of action against her by reason of the deed as could have been enforced by the city of Omaha.

The city could have brought its action for forcible entry

and detention as soon as the defendant wrongfully took possession of the street without its consent. This was in 1893. Its right to maintain this action under the statute accrued at that time, and might be exercised at any time before the expiration of one year. The object of the short period given in which to maintain this action apparently is to compel parties to settle disputes with regard to the occupancy of real estate in which no question of title is involved in a summary manner in justices' courts, so that the dockets of other courts may not be occupied by such disputes, which are often of a trivial and petty character. If the city neglected to bring this action within one year, it would then be compelled to resort to the district court and to bring an action of ejectment. The defendant was in possession of this property at the time that the railroad company acquired title from the city. The company took the same with full knowledge of the defendant's rights, and could acquire no better title against the defendant than the city itself had. It would be a strange thing, indeed, if by the transfer of title to real estate the grantee could acquire greater rights against an occupying claimant than the original owner. The railroad company stands in the shoes of the city, and it can maintain no action against the defendant which was barred as against its grantor at the time it acquired the title.

The defendant claims title by adverse possession. We are of the opinion that under the conceded facts this defense cannot be successfully maintained. It is clear that the statute of limitations has not run in favor of the defendant, since the time which it has held adversely to the railroad company cannot be tacked to the time during which she held possession adversely as against the city, prior to the enactment of the statute of 1899. The enactment of that law stopped the running of the statute, and created a hiatus in her adverse holding. The statute only began to run against the railroad company at the time it acquired the title to the premises. This question, however, cannot be litigated in an action of forcible entry and

First Nat. Bank of Plattsmouth v. Gibson.

detainer. If it appears that the defense of title is made in good faith, the action should be dismissed; but the fact that a defendant interposes a baseless defense will not oust the court of jurisdiction in such a case. *Smith v. Kaiser*, 17 Neb. 184; *Leach v. Sutphen*, 11 Neb. 527; *Streeter v. Rolph*, 13 Neb. 388.

For the reason that the action of forcible entry was barred by the statute of limitations before this action was commenced, we recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

REVERSED.

FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF PLATTSMOUTH V. FRANCIS N.
GIBSON ET AL.*

FILED JUNE 22, 1905. No. 14,199.

Res Judicata. The plea of *res judicata* applies not only to the points upon which the court was required by the parties to pronounce a judgment, but to every point which properly belonged to the subject matter of litigation, and which the parties, exercising reasonable diligence, might have brought forward at that time. This rule is not inflexible, and may yield in cases where a good and valid reason or excuse for the failure to allege the facts and seek relief in the former action is shown, but in the instant case such excuse is neither pleaded nor proved.

ERROR to the district court for Cass county: PAUL JESSEN, JUDGE. *Reversed and dismissed.*

A. N. Sullivan, for plaintiff in error.

S. L. Geisthardt and Samuel Chapman, contra.

LETTON, C.

This action is based upon the same facts narrated in *First Nat. Bank v. Gibson*, 57 Neb. 246, and 60 Neb. 767,

*Rehearing allowed. See opinion, p. 236, *post*.

with the additional fact that, after the former adjudication that the plaintiff's judgment was a lien upon the land in controversy, the premises were sold upon a prior lien by a decree of the United States circuit court for the district of Nebraska, so that the plaintiff had no benefit from its judgment or decree. It seeks by this action to compel Francis N. Gibson to account for the rents and profits of the land during the time he occupied it, and to apply the same to the payment of its judgment. The district court granted the relief prayed to the extent of four years' rents, and held that as to the remainder of the rents and profits the action was barred by the statute of limitations. Plaintiff prosecutes error from this ruling, claiming that the statute had not run, and that it was entitled to all the rents and profits, while the defendant Francis N. Gibson prosecutes a cross-appeal upon the whole record. A number of defenses are set up by the defendant Gibson, for the most part setting up matters adjudicated in the former case. In the view we take of the case, it will only be necessary to consider one of the defenses relied upon. This defense is that the judgment in the former case, which was a creditors' bill to reach the land and subject it to the payment of plaintiff's judgment, is a bar to this action, since it was a former recovery against defendant Francis N. Gibson for everything received by him as a result of the fraud of Carter and Benjamin A. Gibson. The point to be determined is whether or not the cause of action in this case is essentially the same as that in the former case, and whether the relief now sought was obtainable therein.

It is a well-established principle that one is not permitted to split his cause of action; that if he might have had all the relief he seeks in an action he has brought and prosecuted to final judgment, he may not again vex his former adversary with another suit based upon the same wrong. It is also a rule, which we have applied against the appellant herein as to most of the defenses he has set up in his answer, that (to quote the plaintiff in error's brief) "a judgment is conclusive not only as to the subject mat-

ter in suit, but as to all other suits, which, though concerning other subject matter, involve the same issues." In *Henderson v. Henderson*, 3 Hare (Eng.), *100, *115, the vice chancellor said:

"In trying this question, I believe I state the rule of the court correctly, when I say, that where a given matter becomes the subject of litigation in, and of adjudication by, a court of competent jurisdiction, the court requires the parties to that litigation to bring forward their whole case, and will not (except under special circumstances) permit the same parties to open the same subject of litigation in respect of matter which might have been brought forward as part of the subject in contest, but which was not brought forward, only because they have, from negligence, inadvertence, or even accident, omitted part of their case. The plea of *res judicata* applies, except in special cases, not only to points upon which the court was actually required by the parties to form an opinion and pronounce a judgment, but to every point which properly belonged to the subject of litigation, and which the parties, exercising reasonable diligence, might have brought forward at that time. *Beloit v. Morgan*, 7 Wall. (U. S.) 619; *Cromwell v. County of Sac*, 94 U. S. 351; 2 Black, Judgments (2d ed.), sec 609; *Slater v. Skirring*, 51 Neb. 108.

Applying these rules to the present action, what is the situation? The plaintiff by the decree in the creditors' bill established conclusively as against the appellant here the fact that he was not a *bona fide* purchaser of the land, and that it was subject to the lien of its judgment. The matters the appellant sets up in his answer on account of which he seeks to reopen or go behind that adjudication, therefore, cannot be considered, and, as we have seen, he is bound by that adjudication. On the other hand the estoppels are mutual, and the plaintiff having limited his demand for relief in the former action to a decree clearing the title to the land so as to subject it to his judgment lien, and making no showing at that time of the existence of a prior lien which would probably take the land, and

which would warrant him in asking for the aid of the court in reaching the rents and profits which Francis N. Gibson had theretofore received, or an impounding of those thereafter accruing by means of a receiver pending proceedings for review, cannot again pursue the defendant on account of the same cause of action. Had the plaintiff alleged in the former action the facts as to the value of the land, the prior mortgage, the rental value and the need of impounding the rents and profits so as to provide a fund sufficient to satisfy the plaintiff's judgment, we think the power of the court was ample to grant him the relief he now asks. We do not mean to say that this rule is inflexible, and may not yield in cases where a good and valid reason or excuse for the failure to allege the facts and seek relief in the former action is shown. But in the instant case there is neither pleading nor proof of any reason or excuse for not presenting these facts in the former action and obtaining appropriate relief.

In *Hites v. Irvine's Adm'r*, 13 Ohio St. 283, suit had been brought, alleging that the defendant had obtained the legal title to certain property by foreclosure sale under an agreement to hold the property in trust for the plaintiff. A decree was entered in favor of the plaintiff, allowing him to redeem, and ordering a conveyance on payment of the amount found due. Afterwards, another action was brought to compel the administrator of the defendant, who had meanwhile died, to account for waste and for the rents and profits pending the first suit. It was held that these causes of action were proper and necessary subjects of adjudication in the chancery suit, and should have been brought to the notice of the court in that case by supplemental bill or otherwise. See also *Pray v. Hegeman*, 98 N. Y. 351; *Neil v. Tolman*, 12 Ore. 289; *Hackworth v. Zollars*, 30 Ia. 433; Wells, *Res Adjudicata*, sec. 251; *Jordan v. Van Epps*, 85 N. Y. 427.

As to the right asserted herein by the administrator of John M. Carter to the rents and profits, the decree in the former case adjudicated the fact that the transaction

by which the title of Carter to the premises was conveyed through the channel of the sheriff's deed to Benjamin A. Gibson was collusive and fraudulent. This question having been thus settled cannot be reopened, and Carter's administrator can have no better standing in court than would Carter himself have if he were alive. All parties to the former decree are equally bound, and if conclusive as to one it is conclusive as to all.

It is unnecessary to discuss any other of the numerous assignments in the briefs of both plaintiff in error and of the appellant, since these considerations dispose of the case.

We are of the opinion that the former recovery is a bar to this action, and that the judgment of the district court should be reversed and the cause dismissed.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause dismissed.

REVERSED.

SEDGWICK, J., not sitting.

The following opinion on rehearing was filed January 18, 1906. *Judgment of reversal adhered to:*

1. **Law of the Case.** A point necessarily determined by this court upon appeal becomes the law of the case, and, ordinarily, will not be departed from in the further course of the litigation, unless clearly wrong, so that it cannot be supported upon reason or authority.
2. —: **PETITION.** When a petition is held by this court to state a cause of action as against a general demurrer, this ruling becomes the law of the case, and will be adhered to upon a second appeal if the cause has been tried in the district court without specific objection to the sufficiency of the petition.
3. **Creditors' Suit: RENTS.** When a conveyance of real estate is set aside as fraudulent at the suit of a creditor, and the land subjected to the lien of his judgment, and is insufficient to pay the

judgment, such fraudulent grantee may, in proper proceedings, be compelled to apply upon the judgment the rents and profits of the land which accrued while the land was in his possession under the fraudulent conveyance.

4. **Suit Pending: LIMITATION OF ACTIONS.** While an issue is being litigated in the courts, the statute of limitations will not run in favor of one of the parties to that litigation and against the other as to any claim depending upon the result of that litigation.

SEDGWICK, C. J.

In the former opinion, *ante*, p. 232, in the view that was then taken of the case, it was only necessary to consider one of the defenses relied upon. The nature of the case and the facts involved are stated in that opinion, and in the former opinions therein referred to. The question discussed was whether the judgment in the original action, which was in the nature of a creditors' bill to reach the land and subject it to the payment of the plaintiff's judgment, is a bar to this action, which is to recover the rents and profits arising from the land. The point to be determined was there said to be whether or not the cause of action in this case is essentially the same as that in the former case, and whether the relief now sought was obtainable therein. It will be remembered that the proceedings to subject the land to the plaintiff's judgment were begun soon after the transfer of the land by the defendant Carter to the defendant Gibson, which transfer was in that proceeding adjudged to be fraudulent as against this plaintiff. Gibson took possession of the land at the time of its conveyance to him, and received the rents and profits thereof until in the spring of 1901, when the land was sold upon the foreclosure proceedings in the federal court. This was about one year after the litigation upon the creditors' bill was finally determined in this court. Without doubt, under the liberal provisions of the code, the plaintiff might have filed a supplemental petition in the first action, and litigated its rights to the rents and profits that accrued while that action was pending,

and it would seem that there are authorities for the proposition that, ordinarily, the plaintiff would not be allowed to neglect that remedy, and afterwards bring another action to recover the rents and profits. If this rule should be applied to this case, it appears that about one year's rents and profits which accrued after that action was disposed of could not have been included. The plaintiff urges that the rule ought not to be applied in this case, because the mortgage which was foreclosed in the federal court, and which was prior in point of time to the plaintiff's lien, exhausted the land, and so deprived the plaintiff of the fruits of the litigation, which was successful on its part, unless it should be allowed to recover the rents of the land received by Gibson while he held the title and possession. The value of the land was amply sufficient to have paid the plaintiff's claim, and, but for the lien of the prior mortgage, there would have been no necessity of litigating the question of rents and profits; the court in the former action would not have appointed a receiver without the showing that the land itself was insufficient to pay the plaintiff's claim. There is no sufficient plea in bar in the answer. The petition sets out all of the facts in regard to the former action and its results, and in regard to the foreclosure proceedings in the federal court, and the application of the land in payment of the judgment upon those proceedings. These allegations of the petition are admitted in the answer, and there is in the answer what is called the eighth defense, in which it is alleged, "that the suit brought by the plaintiff against this defendant and commenced on or about the 7th day of August, 1899, was an action in equity, wherein and whereby the plaintiff sought to recover of this defendant all and singular the relief to which the plaintiff was or might be entitled by reason of the several matters and facts in the petition in said suit set forth with reference to said land, and whereby the court awarded to the plaintiff the relief asked by the same, and all and singular the relief herein asked in this petition might have been

awarded to the plaintiff in said suit if the plaintiff had established its right thereto; that the plaintiff had full power and opportunity to ask the relief now herein sought, and the court had full power and authority to grant the same. This defendant alleges that by reason thereof the plaintiff's cause of action herein is barred by a former recovery, and the plaintiff by reason thereof is not now entitled to have and maintain this action." None of the facts which were supposed to constitute this defense was pleaded in the answer. The plea amounts only to conclusions of law derived from the allegations of the petition. No reply to this defense was necessary. Of course, all the facts that were required to entitle the plaintiff to recover should have been stated in the petition. The defendant insists that the petition in this respect is defective, in that it does not allege any sufficient reason for neglecting to present to the court in the first action the matter which is now being litigated. He cites *Hites v. Irvine's Adm'r*, 13 Ohio St. 283, as establishing this doctrine. That case is somewhat discussed in the former opinion. In addition to what is there said, it will be noted that the defendant in that case was practically a mortgagee. He held the legal title, but held it in trust as security for the payment of money advanced by him for the plaintiff's use. It was his duty to apply the rents and profits upon the mortgage, and it was likewise the duty of the plaintiff in his action, which was virtually an action to redeem, to insist that the rents and profits should be so applied, and the holding was that, having neglected to do this, the plaintiff could not afterwards maintain an independent action to recover the rents and profits. The court said:

"If, during the pendency of the suit, payments were made by the plaintiff, or rents and profits received by the defendant, which were properly applicable only to the reduction of the debt due to him from the plaintiff, these facts, affecting the very matter in controversy, should have been brought to the notice of the court, by supple-

mental bill or otherwise. If this was not done, and the plaintiff thereby failed to obtain the benefit of credits to which he was entitled in that action, his petition should aver that fact, and also show that such failure was not owing to his own negligence."

Without determining whether this rule applies to the case at bar, we will inquire how the plaintiff's case would stand if it did. Upon a former appeal it was held by this court that the allegations of the petition in the case at bar are sufficient to constitute a cause of action as against a general demurrer. 69 Neb. 21. The question is not discussed in the opinion, but the general demurrer, of course, raised the question of the sufficiency of the petition, and it was overruled by this court. A point necessarily determined by the court upon appeal becomes the law of the case, and, ordinarily, will not be departed from in the further course of the litigation. Unless clearly wrong, so that it cannot be supported upon reason or authority, it will be adhered to as a final adjudication in the cause. The trial court would, as a matter of course, follow the law of the case so established, unless its correctness was specifically challenged. A general objection to evidence on the ground of incompetency would not suggest to the trial court that the petition which had been upheld by this court was the object of attack. The plaintiff upon the trial below asked a witness these questions: Q. "You may state what you know, if anything, about the mortgage upon this land described in the petition." Q. "You may state whether or not that mortgage was supposed, during the period of the litigation in the case of the First National Bank against Gibson and Carter, whether or not that was supposed to have been paid." The defendant Gibson objected to these questions on the ground that they were indefinite, and incompetent, irrelevant, and immaterial, and not tending to specify which mortgage is referred to. The objection was sustained, and the evidence was excluded. The plaintiff then offers "to prove that, in the litigation between Car-

ter and Gibson, Gibson received credit for the payment of that mortgage given by Carter, I think, to the Connecticut Mutual Life Insurance Company, or some eastern company." To this offer of proof the general objection was made that it was incompetent, irrelevant and immaterial. The objection was sustained, and the proof excluded. There was no objection upon the ground that the allegations of the petition were insufficient to admit the evidence. The offered evidence tended to show that the defendant Gibson had agreed with Carter to pay off this mortgage, which was long past due, and that the plaintiff had reason to suppose, during the pendency of the first action, that the land was clear of incumbrance, and would be amply sufficient to pay the plaintiff's claim. The attention of the court was not called to the supposed defect in the petition. Under these circumstances we think that the defendant ought not now to be allowed to ask this court to reverse its former adjudication as to the sufficiency of this petition.

2. The defendant insists that the plaintiff acquired no right in the rent and proceeds of the land. He is wrong in this contention. If the judgment debtor had transferred current funds to the defendant for the purpose of defrauding his creditors, the creditors, upon making this appear, might in equity recover the amount from the defendant; and so, if, to defraud his creditors, he placed in the hands of the defendant that which would produce value, intending that the proceeds should be placed beyond the reach of his creditors, such proceeds could in equity be reached by the creditors. In *Robinson v. Stewart*, 10 N. Y. 189, which is relied upon by the defendant, the general creditors had not reduced their claims to judgment, and were therefore not in a position to reach the proceeds of the land by creditors' bill.

3. The defendant also relies upon the statute of limitations. He says in the brief that the action is one for fraud, and that, "according to the plea of the plaintiff, the fraud had its inception on or about the — day of May,

First Nat. Bank of Plattsmouth v. Gibson.

1887, and was consummated in November, 1887," and that the fraud was discovered by the plaintiff in August, 1889. These considerations will not enable the defendant to avail himself of the statute of limitations. It is true that this action arises out of and depends upon the fraudulent transfer of the land. That the land was fraudulently transferred is established by prior litigation. While the defendant was resisting that allegation in the courts, the statute of limitations could not run against the plaintiff's contention that the land was fraudulently conveyed. *Hutchinson v. Ainsworth*, 73 Cal. 452, 15 Pac. 82. In this action it was necessary to show that the land had been fraudulently transferred. No recovery could be had without the existence of that fact. While that question was being litigated in the courts, the statute of limitations as to any claim that depended upon the questions there in controversy would not run in favor of one party in that controversy and against the other. Without counting the time while the action to set aside the transfer of the land from Carter to Gibson was pending, the statute of limitations has not run upon any part of the plaintiff's claim. The trial court therefore erred in limiting the plaintiff's recovery to the rents of the land accrued within the four years immediately preceding the commencement of this action.

4. Various other defenses are asserted and relied upon that were in issue in the former action and there determined. The parties to this litigation are bound by that judgment.

Our former judgment is vacated, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings in accordance with this opinion.

REVERSED.

GEORGE M. CASTER V. JOHN F. SCHEUNEMAN.

FILED JUNE 22, 1905. No. 13,856.

Justice's Court: APPEAL: UNDERTAKING. In order to confer jurisdiction upon a district court upon appeal from a judgment of a justice of the peace, the justice's docket must show affirmatively not only that an undertaking such as the law requires was executed within the prescribed time, but that it was delivered to the justice to be entered upon his records.

ERROR to the district court for Franklin county: ED L. ADAMS, JUDGE. *Reversed with directions.*

A. H. Byrum and George M. Caster, for plaintiff in error.

J. P. A. Black, H. Whitmore and H. W. Short, contra.

AMES, C.

This action was begun in replevin in a justice's court, where there was a trial which resulted, on the 9th day of July, 1903, in a judgment for the plaintiff. An attempted appeal was docketed in the district court, accompanied by a certified transcript of the justice's docket, containing the following recitals:

"On this 15th day of July, 1903, at the town of Franklin, Franklin county, Nebraska, H. Whitmore and H. W. Short, attorneys for defendant, presented to me an appeal undertaking which I, supposing it would be left with me and in my custody, then and there approved and placed upon it my filing mark. Said attorneys then and there took the said undertaking and refused upon my demand to permit me to take it and place it on my docket and keep it with the other files in this case. Said attorneys demanded of me a transcript of the proceedings had before me in this case, which I have refused at this

time because I do not consider that the defendant has furnished and filed with me the necessary undertaking as required by law. N. GLICK, *Justice of the Peace.*"

"July 29, 1903. On this day H. Whitmore, attorney for defendant, came before me and made a tender of \$2 and demanded a transcript of the proceedings in this case, said Whitmore agreeing that he would pay any legal fee for making a transcript in excess of \$2 now tendered. I refused to accept the tender and agreement of said Whitmore and to make out the transcript, because I did not consider that the defendant had furnished to the plaintiff the undertaking in the time and manner required by law.

"N. GLICK, *Justice of the Peace.*"

"July 31, 1903. On this day at the town of Franklin, H. Whitmore handed me the following undertaking, which I disapproved of, but, at the request of said Whitmore, brought with me to Riverton to copy on my docket. Which undertaking was copied by me and returned forthwith to said Whitmore."

Here follows what purports to be a copy of an appeal undertaking, bearing date of July 9, and answering to the description given in the first of the above copied recitals, and an additional indorsement as follows: "Handed me at Franklin and disapproved July 31, 1903, copied on my docket and returned to H. Whitmore attorney for defendant."

The plaintiff appeared specially, and objected to the jurisdiction of the court, and moved to dismiss the appeal because of the absence of an appeal undertaking; but the objection and motion were both overruled, and the parties were ordered to plead, which they did, and the cause proceeded to trial and judgment in favor of the defendant, from which the plaintiff prosecutes error to this court.

There are several assignments of errors alleged to have occurred at the trial, none of which we shall consider, be-

cause, in our opinion, it is properly assigned that the court erred in overruling the objection to its jurisdiction and the motion to dismiss the appeal. The transcript recites that affidavits were filed both in support of and in opposition to them, but a supposed bill of exceptions authenticating the affidavits was not made until nearly six months after the date of the adjournment of the term at which the case was finally disposed of, so that they are not worthy of consideration; and if in any event the justice's transcript can be impeached in the manner attempted, that document must in this instance be treated as importing verity.

Section 1086 of the code requires that every justice of the peace must keep a docket upon which certain entries of proceedings before him shall be made—among others: "Thirteenth. If appeal be taken, the undertaking and the time of entering into the same, and by which party taken," and section 1087, that, with certain exceptions, "the several particulars in the last section specified must be entered under the title of the action to which they relate, and at the time when they occurred," and shall be evidence, when certified by the justice, to prove the facts stated therein. Section 1007 requires an undertaking in appeal to be entered into within ten days from the rendition of the judgment appealed from. It is quite clear, therefore, that, in order to confer jurisdiction upon the district court, the justice's docket must show affirmatively not only that an undertaking such as the law requires was executed within the time prescribed, but that it was delivered to him to be entered upon his records. This transcript not only omits this essential feature, but recites affirmatively that the required step was not taken. Whether the recital is of greater weight or significance than the omission it is not necessary now to decide. It is sufficient to say that the absence of a jurisdictional record cannot be supplied by presumption or parol. Neither is it necessary to decide what would have been the defendant's remedy or procedure if he had seasonably tendered a proper under-

Nebraska Moline Plow Co. v. Blackburn.

taking, and the justice had refused to accept it. Such a state of affairs is not only not disclosed by the record, but if the justice's recital of what occurred at a distance of many miles from his office, and outside the precinct or township for which he was elected, is to be considered at all, which we doubt, it tends to prove the exact contrary. The conduct of defendant's attorney, as related by the transcript, had the necessary effect, if it was not expressly designed, to defeat the clearly expressed intent of the statute, viz., that within ten days after the rendition of the judgment the undertaking in appeal shall be delivered finally into the custody of the justice, and entered upon his docket, so that a copy thereof may be included in his transcript to be transmitted to the clerk of the district court within twenty days thereafter.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded, with instructions to dismiss the appeal.

LETTON and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded, with instructions to dismiss the appeal.

REVERSED.

NEBRASKA MOLINE PLOW COMPANY V. WILLIAM R. BLACKBURN.

FILED JUNE 22, 1905. No. 13,872.

1. *Bona Fide Purchaser.* One is not a *bona fide* purchaser for value until he has actually paid the purchase price or become irrevocably bound for its payment.
2. A trustee in bankruptcy succeeds to the bankrupt's title to choses in action, subject to any defense, abatement or counterclaim to which they would have been liable in the hands of the latter.

ERROR to the district court for Scott's Bluff county:
HANSON M. GRIMES, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

O'Neill & Gilbert, for plaintiff in error.

R. C. Noleman and Gardner & White, contra.

AMES, C.

J. S. Romine was the owner and in the possession of a stock of merchandise of the general description usually found in country stores, and in which was included certain agricultural implements bought by him from the plaintiff in error, who was plaintiff in the court below. The purchase price of the implements had not been paid, and the contract of purchase provided that title to them should remain in the vendor until it should be paid, and if the vendee should, before payment, "sell out, fail or become insolvent," it should become and be immediately due and payable. On the 14th day of July, 1902, Romine sold and delivered the stock of goods, including the implements, to the defendant Blackburn, the contract with the plaintiff not being of record, and Blackburn having no knowledge or notice of its existence. The purchase price for the stock of goods was satisfied by the transfer by Blackburn to Romine of certain corporate shares in an Ohio institution, of an agreed and actual value of \$2,600, and by the execution by the former to the latter of promissory notes for the sum of \$14,631.57, secured by mortgages on lands lying without this state. Whether the notes were negotiable in form does not appear and is under the circumstances immaterial, because they were never in fact negotiated or attempted so to be. On the 26th day of the month this action was begun in replevin to recover the possession of the implements, which were of the value, as subsequently found by the jury, of about \$750. On the 28th of July, two days after the seizure of the property in replevin, an involuntary petition in bankruptcy was filed

against Romine, upon which there was subsequently an adjudication, and afterwards the notes executed by the defendant in part consideration of the purchase of the stock of goods came into the possession of the trustee in bankruptcy, and were discharged by Blackburn, upon a compromise and settlement, by the payment of \$7,000 to the trustee, and some \$1,700 to other persons, pursuant to an agreement with his vendor at the time of his purchase. The petition is in the usual form, and the answer is a general denial, and the above related facts are not in dispute. There were a verdict and judgment for the defendant, and the sole question in this proceeding is, are they supported by the evidence? We think the answer must be in the negative. Blackburn bought the property in suit in good faith, but before he had made or had become irrevocably bound to make payment of the purchase price to the extent of at least \$13,000 thereof or thereabout, his title failed, and he became fully aware of the fact. As between himself and his vendor, or anyone standing in the shoes of the latter, he became immediately entitled to abate the value of the implements from his purchase price. As has been said, it does not appear that his notes were either negotiated or negotiable, but, if they had been of the latter description, it is not doubted that the trustee in bankruptcy was not in the attitude of an innocent purchaser for value. He merely succeeded to the bankrupt's title to the notes, subject to any defense, abatement or counterclaim to which they would have been liable in the hands of the latter. *Hewit v. Berlin Machine Works*, 194 U. S. 296, 48 L. ed. 986, and cases cited in opinion. Such being the situation, the case falls within the principles of the decisions of this court in *Hedrick v. Strauss*, 42 Neb. 485, and *Bush v. Collins*. 35 Kan. 535. It is true that in these cases the matters under consideration were transactions in fraud of the creditors of the vendor, to which this case is only collaterally related; but obviously the same principles are applicable to this case as to them. One is not a *bona fide* purchaser for value unless he has

actually paid the purchase price or become irrevocably bound for its payment, as, for instance, by giving his negotiable obligation, which has been or may be transferred to an innocent purchaser according to the law merchant, so as to cut off his defense to it. But in this case, whether the defendant's notes were negotiable or not, it is certain that they never were negotiated. Whether in the latter case that fact would affect the result, we are not called upon now to decide.

We are of opinion therefore that the evidence is insufficient to sustain the verdict and judgment, and recommend that they be reversed and a new trial granted.

LETTON and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and a new trial granted.

REVERSED.

SEDGWICK, J., not sitting.

BEN COHEN V. EDWIN R. HAWKINS ET AL.

FILED JUNE 22, 1905. No. 13,876.

Sale: ACCEPTANCE. A vendee who accepts and retains goods and consumes them by use, without objection, admits by so doing that they are satisfactorily in compliance with the terms of his purchase as respects character and quality.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: **EDMUND M. BARTLETT, JUDGE.** *Affirmed.*

A. L. Knabe, for plaintiff in error.

Crane & Boucher, contra.

AMES, C.

The only question in this case is whether the answer states facts sufficient to constitute a defense. The district court held that it does not, and directed a verdict, and entered a judgment accordingly, from which the defendant prosecutes error.

The action is to recover a balance alleged to be due upon an open and running account for merchandise sold and delivered by the assignor of the plaintiff to the defendant. The defendant was engaged in business in Omaha as a retail merchant tailor, and the goods bought were woolens and trimmings for use in his trade. They were purchased and delivered to him in two quantities at agreed prices, one on August 25, 1899, and the other on February 5, 1900, for the aggregate sum of \$2,024.61. The defendant received them, and consumed them in the ordinary course of his trade, without objection, and made payments on account of them from time to time, usually of \$100 each, and at intervals of about a month, until he had made 18 such payments, aggregating \$1,462.50 in amount, the last of them being made on July 29, 1901. The plaintiffs became the assignees of the residue of the claim for value, and in good faith, in June, 1902, and in May of the following year begun this action. The defense is that, at the time the defendant agreed to purchase the goods on August 15, 1889, it was represented to him by the vendor that they "should all be of the very best quality and materials, and up to date in quality and color in every respect, and that all the goods that would be forwarded to him should be fully worth the price therein charged," but that the goods, "at the time they were delivered to the defendant, were all of a worthless, rotten and inferior quality, and were entirely unfit for the purposes for which they were intended," and that the statements of the vendor with reference thereto were false and fraudulent, and that therefore the defendant had never incurred any liability by reason of the transaction,

and his payments on account thereof were made without any consideration. So far as appears, the averments of the answer are the first complaint made by the defendant concerning the quality of the goods or the alleged breach of his contract by his vendor.

The case is ruled, undoubtedly, by the decision of this court in *Hazen v. Wilhelmie*, 68 Neb. 79. A vendee who accepts and retains goods and consumes them by use, without objection, admits, by so doing, that they are satisfactorily in compliance with the terms of his purchase as respects character and quality. We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

LETTON and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

AFFIRMED.

SEDGWICK, J., not sitting.

JACOB K. MAY ET AL. V. FIRST NATIONAL BANK OF MENDOTA, ILLINOIS.

FILED JUNE 22, 1905. No. 13,881.

1. **Notes: TRANSFER AFTER MATURITY.** An assignee of the payee of negotiable paper after maturity takes the same subject to any defense to which it would have been liable in the hands of his assignor.
2. **Chattel Mortgage: ASSIGNMENT: ESTOPPEL.** If an assignor of a chattel mortgage given to secure a promissory note which is past due at the time of the assignment has, prior thereto, become estopped by his own conduct from enforcing it against an innocent subsequent mortgage for value, his assignee is also estopped.
3. **Verdict: EVIDENCE.** Upon an examination of the record it is found that the verdict and judgment of the district court are such as the evidence was alone sufficient to support.

ERROR to the district court for Buffalo county: BRUNO O. HOSTETLER, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

McCoy & Olmsted and Hamer & Hamer, for plaintiffs in error.

C. A. Robinson and H. M. Sinclair, contra.

AMES, C.

On February 18, 1901, F. J. Greer executed to Shelley-Rogers Company a mortgage on certain cattle owned by him to secure payment of his promissory note for \$8,020.96, payable October 24, then next following. The mortgage was made duly of record, and the note at its maturity, augmented by accrued interest, was extended so as to become due January 5, 1902. In December, before the maturity of the note as extended, a larger part of the cattle were shipped to the mortgagee, which was a live stock commission dealer at South Omaha, and sold, and the proceeds of the sale, amounting to \$5,080.44, applied toward payment of this and other indebtedness, leaving an unsatisfied balance of \$4,495.35. For this residue the mortgagee was desirous of obtaining payment or marketable paper, but it was agreed between the parties that the unsold residue of the cattle would not be adequate security for a sum exceeding \$2,200. A mortgage upon the remnant of the herd to secure a note for that sum, and containing the usual covenants that the property described in it belonged to the mortgagor, free from prior liens, etc., was executed and delivered by Greer to the commission firm. There was thus left unprovided for, of the old indebtedness, \$2,295.35, which was paid in part by a shipment of hogs, and afterwards further reduced so as to leave a residue of \$1,742.53, which was put into a new note secured by a mortgage on real estate. Shortly after the settlement, the defendant in error became in the usual course of business in good faith, and for value, before maturity, the indorsee and owner of the \$2,200 note and mortgage, which have never been paid, but which have been several times renewed. The last renewal was by a

new note and mortgage corresponding in all respects with its predecessors, except augmentation by accrued interest, but executed February 20, 1903, and filed for record six days later. The note for \$1,742.53 was executed October 1, 1902, long subsequently to the execution and sale of the note for \$2,200, and on the day after its execution was sold to the plaintiffs in error. Between the promissory part of the instrument and the signature is a recital upon a printed blank to the effect that its payment is secured by collateral consisting of the first mentioned note of \$8,020.96 and the mortgage given as security for the latter. Greer, the maker, testified without contradiction that the blanks in this recital were not filled at the time he executed and delivered the note, nor afterwards with his consent or knowledge. In October, 1903, the defendant in error took possession of the cattle described in its mortgage, which were taken from it under an order of replevin in this action. There was a trial resulting in a verdict and judgment for the defendant below, to reverse which this proceeding is prosecuted. None of the above recited facts is in dispute, and there are no others involved in the litigation, so that the sole question is, to whom does the law award the title and right of possession of the animals taken in replevin?

We think the answer should be in favor of the defendant. The plaintiff's claim arises solely out of the recitals in the note purchased by it, which could be effectual, if at all, merely as a pledge of a chose in action. Now, besides the uncontradicted testimony of the maker, Greer, that these recitals were not made or authorized by him, and are therefore nugatory, the instrument to which they refer did not, at the time they appear as having been made, purport to be such a document as they describe. It was by its terms nearly a year and a half past due, and bore no evidence of being secured by mortgage, and it carried memoranda on its back indicating that three payments had been made upon it, aggregating the sum of \$5,460.34. Certainly a more discredited piece of paper, or one less

entitled to the favorable presumptions of the law merchant, would be difficult to imagine. Its assignees cannot pretend to stand in any better light than their assignor would have done if the transfer had not been made. What was the position of the payee, Shelley-Rogers Company? It had taken and sold to an innocent purchaser for value a mortgage upon a part of the identical cattle described in the first mortgage, which recited that the animals were in the "undisputed possession (of the mortgagor), free from all liens and incumbrances," which is equivalent to a recital, or at least representation, that the former mortgage had been satisfied and discharged. Whether with or without this recital the jury would have been fully justified in finding that, and we think would not have been excusable for finding otherwise than that, as they doubtless did find, the transaction with reference to the note and mortgage for \$8,020.96 amounted to, and was intended by the parties as, a satisfaction, payment and discharge of those instruments; and with this recital in an instrument in the hands of an innocent purchaser for value, there seems to us to be no room for doubt that both mortgagor and mortgagee were, and are, estopped to deny that such was not the case. As a proposition of law it would be absurd to say that the plaintiffs, when they acquired the instrument in controversy, were not put upon their inquiry with respect to its validity and status. If they had made inquiry of Greer, the maker, to whom their attention was immediately directed, they would have learned without difficulty or delay that their supposed collateral had been fully satisfied, in part by the security held by the defendant, and as to the residue by payments in money and by the note purchased by plaintiffs, which was secured by a mortgage on real estate; and, in addition thereto, that the property described in the old mortgage had been disposed of, all of it, with the consent and concurrence of both mortgagor and mortgagee, a larger part by sale and the remainder by a new mortgage securing a negotiable promissory note. It can hardly be necessary

to cite authorities in support of so plain and indisputable a conclusion. The rights of the defendant are even superior to those of the mortgagor; but that the latter, if he had not made or authorized the disputed recitals, as the uncontradicted evidence is that he did not, could successfully defend against the so-called collateral note and mortgage, has been so often decided by this and other courts in similar cases that the rule of law has become axiomatic. *Roberson v. Reiter*, 38 Neb. 198; *Owen v. Evans*, 134 N. Y. 514, 31 N. E. 999. As respects this recital, counsel seek to evade the force of the uncontradicted testimony by Greer by citing *Humphrey Hardware Co. v. Herrick*, 72 Neb. 878, to the effect that the maker of a note on a printed form, who delivers the instrument with unfilled blanks, in some circumstances impliedly authorizes the filling of the blanks after such delivery. But the case is not in point. In this instance the filling of the blanks, or the recital itself, was not essential to the completion of the contract as an obligation to pay a specified sum of money at all events on a day certain. The instrument was to that extent perfect. If the blanks had been properly filled, the recital would not have constituted, but would have been evidence of, a contract of pledge of the prior note as collateral security for the payment of the later one. That contract, if it was made, was not dependent upon the recital for its terms, validity or certainty. The blank spaces, if they were left unfilled, cannot be said to have implied authority to fill them with a description of the prior note, rather than of any other instrument, unless a previous contract of pledge, of which there is no evidence, had been entered into. In other words, it cannot be presumed that the delivery of the note with unfilled blanks carried with it implied authority to the payee to insert, at its option, the description of any obligation or chose in action of the maker it happened to have in its possession. In short, the recital in the instrument is of no significance at all unless it was made by the payor, or with his previous consent or subsequent ratification. Such a pledge as the al-

May v. First Nat. Bank of Mendota.

leged recital purports to evidence would have been inconsistent with the circumstances and the relations of the parties as above set forth, and could not have been made without an intent on the part of both maker and payee to perpetrate a fraud upon innocent third persons. For such conduct the former had no known or conjecturable motive. By so doing he could have gained nothing, and would have been likely to subject himself to embarrassment and loss by uttering two obligations for a single debt. It is far less likely that he did so than that he omitted to take up and destroy the old note through carelessness or inadvertence. We think that under the evidence a verdict by the jury that the recital was made by or with the consent of Greer would have lacked sufficient support, and could not have been upheld. But, if it were otherwise, if both the pledge and the recital were made at the time the plaintiff's note was executed, it could not be availed of in the hands of an assignee after maturity to cut off the prior equity of an innocent purchaser for value who had rightfully relied upon the recitals in his own instrument.

Exceptions were taken to several instructions, but as we are of opinion that the verdict returned is the only one that the evidence would support, we have not felt called upon to discuss them, but recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

LETTON and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

AFFIRMED.

SEDGWICK, J., not sitting.

LINCOLN GAS & ELECTRIC LIGHT COMPANY V. WALTER E. THOMAS.

FILED JUNE 22, 1905. No. 13,828.

Evidence examined, and held not sufficient to sustain the judgment.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: LINCOLN FROST, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

I. R. Andrews, H. F. Rose and Edgar M. Morsman, for plaintiff in error.

T. J. Doyle, contra.

OLDHAM, C.

This is an action for damages sustained by the plaintiff in the court below while in the employment of the defendant as a lineman. There was a trial to a jury in the district court, verdict for the plaintiff, judgment on the verdict, and to reverse this judgment defendant brings error to this court.

At the outset of the opinion it is well to say that a careful examination of the proceedings in the court below reveals no reversible error in the conduct of the case, either in the admission and exclusion of evidence, or in the instructions given, if the evidence introduced by the plaintiff, when liberally construed and given the benefit of every reasonable conclusion which logically flows from the facts proved, can be said to be sufficient to show any actionable negligence on defendant's part, on which the proximate cause of the injury can be predicated.

The record shows that, at the time of the injury, plaintiff was a lineman engaged in putting a cross-arm on the top of one of defendant's electric light poles, and in stringing and adjusting wires on this cross-arm. For the purpose of climbing and working on defendant's poles, a lineman is provided with a pair of metallic spurs, or climbers,

fastened to the feet, and a strong leathern belt, which is buckled around his waist. On each side of this belt is a ring, into which a second or "safety" belt is fastened by means of metallic snaps when the lineman is working on the pole. This safety belt extends around the pole to prevent the lineman from falling backward or forward while at work. The cross-arms used on the poles are about 32 inches long, and are fastened to the pole by an iron bolt driven into the pole. These cross-arms are further supported by iron stays on each end of the arm. These stays, or supports, are fastened to the cross-arm about two inches from the end by bolts which are driven through the arm and secured on the inside of the arm by a nut or tap. The other end of the iron stay is bolted by the lineman into the pole. The iron stays are generally bolted on the ends of the cross-arms in defendant's shop before they are delivered to the linemen for use. On the pole where the injury occurred there were two main cross-arms. The upper one, which extended north and south, was the one on which plaintiff was stringing wires when the accident happened. While plaintiff was working on this cross-arm, another lineman in defendant's employ had fastened a lower cross-arm on the pole, extending east and west about a foot below the upper arm, and standing at right angles to it. After this second cross-arm was fastened to the pole, plaintiff, while working on the upper arm, brought his left side in contact with and against the inside of the lower cross-arm. While thus engaged, as his evidence tends to show, the bolt which protruded through the stay of the cross-arm came in contact with the spring of the snap which fastened his safety belt to the ring in his body belt, and loosened it from the body belt; and this caused the plaintiff to fall to the ground and sustain a serious and painful injury. The evidence shows that it was the custom of the defendant company to fasten the stays on these cross-arms with bolts four inches in length; that the width of the cross-arm is about three and one-quarter inches, so that when they were bolted with four-inch bolts the thread

end of the bolt, instead of standing flush with the tap which secured it on the inner side of the arm, projects from one-quarter to one-half an inch beyond the tap. The evidence shows that the circumference of the ring in which the safety belt was snapped was about one-eighth of an inch thick. Now, the negligence declared on is that defendant had used a bolt four and one-half inches in length to fasten the stays on this lower cross-arm, and that by reason of this negligent act the end of the bolt projected three-quarters of an inch beyond the tap on the inside of the arm, and that this extra half-inch projection of the bolt was the cause of the injury.

Now, conceding everything that the plaintiff's testimony tends to establish as having been proved, it may be summarized as follows: It is shown that plaintiff received serious injury, while in the line of his duty in the defendant's employ; that the injury was not occasioned by any fault on plaintiff's part; that the proximate cause of the injury was the unfastening of the safety belt from the ring in the main belt, and that this was caused by the spring of the snap coming in contact with the projecting end of the bolt in the cross-arm; and that this bolt projected about half an inch farther than bolts ordinarily used in this work would project. What further deduction can be made from these established facts which tends to show actionable negligence on defendant's part in the use of these bolts?

It is suggested by counsel for plaintiff below that the record show that the jury, by consent of counsel, were permitted to go and view the premises, and from this view of the premises they may have gained information necessarily not imparted to this court in the bill of exceptions. In support of this contention we are cited to our former holdings in *Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co. v. Farwell*, 59 Neb. 544, and *Omaha & R. V. R. Co. v. Walker*, 17 Neb. 435. In each of the cases cited the question involved was as to the value of lands taken under condemnation proceedings by the railroad. In cases of this character it is manifest

that a view of the premises would of itself constitute evidence not imparted by the record. But, in the case at bar we cannot see what advantage a view of the premises could be in determining the question as to whether an extra projection of half an inch of the bolt through the cross-arm on the pole was the proximate cause of the injury; or, whether the use of a four and one-half-inch bolt, instead of a four-inch one, was such an act as would suggest to a reasonable mind the probability of such an accident as befell the plaintiff. On first principles negligence has been defined as "a want of that care which a man of common prudence and of common sense ordinarily exercises in like employment." To constitute it, there must be "a disregard of some duty or rule of conduct prescribed beforehand or arising so manifestly from the facts as to leave no doubt of its existence." Wharton, Negligence, sec. 3; Deering, Negligence, sec. 3. It is of the essence of actionable negligence that the party charged should have knowledge that the act complained of was such an act of omission or commission as might, within the domain of probability, cause some such an injury as that complained of. After much hesitation, we are forced to the conclusion that there is nothing in the record from which we can reasonably impute knowledge to the defendant, either of the probability of the peculiar and extraordinary accident that happened to plaintiff, or that the ordinary hazard of a lineman at work on its poles would be in any manner enhanced by the use of these bolts in its cross-arms.

We therefore conclude that the evidence is not sufficient to sustain the judgment, and we recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded.

AMES and LETTON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the above opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded.

REVERSED.

CLARK C. MCNISH ET AL. V. STATE, EX REL. SARAH DIMICK.

FILED JUNE 22, 1905. No. 13,854.

1. **Mandamus: PUBLIC SCHOOLS: FOSTER-CHILD.** Mandamus will lie at the relation of the foster-parent of a child of school age, who is a *bona fide* resident of the district, to compel the board of education to admit such child to attendance, without the payment of tuition, in the public schools of the city in which such foster-parent resides.
2. ———: **ADOPTION.** To be entitled to such relief, it is not necessary that the foster-parent shall have legally adopted the child under the forms of our statutes.

ERROR to the district court for Dodge county: CONRAD HOLLENBECK, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

Grant G. Martin and John W. Graham, for plaintiffs in error.

Courtright & Sidner, contra.

OLDHAM, C.

This was an action on the relation of Sarah Dimick for a peremptory writ of mandamus against the members of the board of education of the school district of the city of Fremont and the superintendent of public schools of said city, to compel the respondents to admit Iva Dimick, a child of the age of eight years, to the public schools of the city of Fremont. A peremptory writ was granted by the district court, and to reverse this judgment respondents bring error to this court.

The facts underlying this controversy are that the relator in this proceeding is, and has been for several years preceding the controversy, a *bona fide* resident and taxpayer of the city and school district of Fremont. The relator is a widow, and was living alone in April, 1903. Prior to this time the mother of the child, called Iva Rarick Dimick, had died in the state of Iowa, leaving a husband

and six children. The mother of the child was a cousin of the relator. After the death of Iva's mother, Mrs. Dimick corresponded with the father, and offered to take the child and raise her, educate her, and treat her in all respects as her own child, if the father would give Iva to her. After considerable correspondence, the father consented to the proposition. On the 25th day of April, 1903, he brought the child to Omaha, and gave her into the care and custody of the relator, and since that time the child has lived with the relator as a member of her household. The name of the child was entered on the enumeration lists in the school census of the district. She entered the schools and attended for some months without objection. Later, when the schools became crowded, the teacher of the grade in which the child was instructed, by direction of the superintendent, refused her admission, unless she would comply with the rule of the board which required the payment of tuition from nonresident pupils of the district. The relator appealed to the board for permission for the child's attendance, which the board refused, and on this refusal the present cause of action was instituted.

There is practically no disputed fact in the record. Respondents rely on a rule of the board, as follows: "Children, whose parents (or guardians who have legally adopted them) do not reside in the school district of Fremont shall be considered as nonresident pupils. They shall pay tuition per month, in advance, as follows." The respondent school district is governed by the provisions of section 2, chapter 79, subdivision 14, Compiled Statutes, 1903 (Ann. St. 11237), as follows: "That all schools organized within the limits of said cities shall be under the direction and control of the boards of education authorized by this subdivision. Such schools shall be free to all children between the ages of five and twenty-one years, whose parents or guardians live within the limits of said district, and all children of school age nonresidents of said district who are or may be by law allowed to attend said schools without charge." It will be noted that the rule of the

board relied upon qualifies the word guardian by the parenthetical clause, "who have legally adopted them," and that no such clause is found in the statute relied upon to support the rule. It is true that the relator has never been appointed by a process of any court the guardian of Iva Dimick, nor has she ever formally adopted her as her own child; and yet no reasonable mind could deny that she does stand *in loco parentis* toward the child. When the father found that, on account of the death of his wife, his own straitened financial circumstances, and the large size of his dependent family, he was unable to keep the children with him, he yielded to the request of the relator to furnish a home for the child and to educate and care for it in all respects as if it had been the natural child of the foster mother. Now, the question arises as to whether section 2, *supra*, of our statutes is to be narrowly and technically construed for the purpose of shutting the doors of the school houses in the faces of many of the little boys and girls of the city and turning them out into the streets and by-ways, to grow up in idleness and ignorance, or whether it shall be liberally and broadly interpreted in the spirit of the provisions of section 6, article VIII of our constitution, which says: "The legislature shall provide for the free instruction in the common schools of this state of all persons between the ages of five and twenty-one years." Our view of the case is fitly expressed in the language of state superintendent Thayer of the state of Wisconsin, which is quoted with approval by the supreme court of that state in *State v. Thayer*, 74 Wis. 48, 41 N. W. 1014, and is as follows:

"In the incidents of human life families are broken up and must be scattered, by the necessities of obtaining a livelihood, by death of one or both parties, or by abandonment of offspring, as in this case. Such children, as all others, are the wards of the state, to the extent of providing for their education to that degree that they can care for themselves and act the part of intelligent citizens. To secure these ends, laws relating to public schools must

Shreck v. Hanlon.

be interpreted to accord with this dominant, controlling spirit and purpose of their enactment, rather than in the narrower spirit of their possible relations to questions of pauperism and administration of estates."

The doctrine here announced is supported by holdings in *Yale v. West Middle School District*, 59 Conn. 489, 22 Atl. 295; *Board of Education v. Hobbs*, 8 Okla. 293, 56 Pac. 1052; *Mizner v. School District*, 2 Neb. (Unof.) 238.

We therefore conclude that the learned trial judge properly awarded the peremptory writ to compel the respondents to admit the child to their public schools, and we recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and LETTON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the above opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

SEDGWICK, J., not sitting.

JESSE R. SHRECK, TRUSTEE, APPELLEE, v. ELIZA E. HANLON, APPELLANT.

FILED JUNE 22, 1905. No. 13,871.

1. **Bankruptcy: CREDITORS' SUIT.** A trustee in bankruptcy, acting for the creditors of the bankrupt, may maintain an action in the nature of a creditors' bill to set aside a fraudulent conveyance, without reducing the claims of the creditors to judgment.
2. —: **APPLICATION FOR DISCHARGE.** The question of fraud in conveyances made prior to July 1, 1898, could not be determined in a hearing on application by a bankrupt for his discharge in the bankrupt proceedings. *Paxton v. Scott*, 66 Neb. 385, followed and approved.
3. **Evidence examined, and held sufficient to support the judgment.**

APPEAL from the district court for Clay county: ED L. ADAMS, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

John C. Stevens, for appellant.

Thomas H. Matters and *Ambrose C. Epperson*, contra.

OLDHAM, C.

This was an action in the nature of a creditors' bill instituted by the trustee in bankruptcy of the estate of David Hanlon, a bankrupt, for the purpose of setting aside the conveyance of 480 acres of land situated in Clay county, Nebraska, to Eliza E. Hanlon, wife of the bankrupt, as having been made in fraud of his creditors. The cause was instituted in the district court for Clay county, and is here a second time for review. At the first hearing of the cause in the district court a judgment was rendered in favor of the defendants. This judgment was reviewed on error and reversed by this court. *Shreck v. Hanlon*, 66 Neb. 451. The issues in the case are set forth in this opinion, and the questions determined, which are now governed by the rule of "the law of the case," are that the plaintiff has legal capacity to maintain the action; that the action was not barred by the statute of limitations when the cause was instituted; that it is not a sufficient defense to the action to show that the bankrupt had other property in his possession at the time the transfers were made which was sufficient to satisfy the creditors, if the conveyance was, in fact, fraudulent and made for the purpose of defeating claims of creditors, and at the time of commencing the action the grantor in the conveyance had no property subject to execution, out of which the claims could be made. When the cause was reversed and remanded, in pursuance to the directions of our first opinion, a new trial was had to the court, and plaintiff's bill was dismissed as to the quarter section of land occupied by defendants as a homestead, and the conveyance from the husband to the wife of the other two quarter sections was set aside as fraudulent. To reverse this judgment, defendant Eliza E. Hanlon appeals to this court.

The petition was instituted by the trustee in bankruptcy to subject the lands in dispute to the payment of the following claims, which are admitted to have been properly filed, approved, and allowed by the referee against the estate of the bankrupt: Claim of the First National Bank of Harvard for \$445.45 and interest; claim of the First National Bank of Harvard for \$33.85 and interest; claim of Jesse R. Shreck for \$20.20 and interest; claim of S. J. Rice & Co., for \$74.50 and interest; claim of the Commercial State Bank of Clay Center for \$170.88 and interest; claim of the Phoenix Insurance Company of Brooklyn, New York, for \$170.88 and interest. But one of these claims, that of the Commercial State Bank of Clay Center, has ever been reduced to judgment and had execution returned unsatisfied thereon prior to its being filed with the referee, and it is now contended by appellant that this is the only claim on which a creditors' action will lie at the suit of the trustee to set aside the alleged fraudulent conveyance of the real estate in controversy. This question, however, has been determined against the contention of the appellant in *Sheldon v. Parker*, 66 Neb. 610, wherein this court held:

"The bankrupt act vests the assignee with title to all property conveyed by the bankrupt in fraud of creditors, and he may proceed to recover the interest of the bankrupt in the property, whether any creditor was in position to attack the transfer or not."

And again in *Hood v. Blair State Bank*, 3 Neb. (Unof.) 432, it was specifically held that a trustee in bankruptcy, acting for the creditors of the bankrupt, may maintain an action in the nature of a creditors' bill to set aside a fraudulent conveyance, without reducing the claims of the creditors to judgment. While we are aware that we are not bound by the language and reasoning of this opinion, yet the conclusion reached on this question is in harmony with the doctrine announced in *Sheldon v. Parker*, *supra*, and is supported by the holding in *Southard v. Benner*, 72 N. Y. 424.

The next point urged is that the question involved in this controversy was adjudged adversely to the claim of the appellee, and more particularly the claim of the Commercial State Bank, by the United States district court, because it is admitted in the record that this creditor objected to Hanlon's discharge in bankruptcy because at the time of the commencement of the action he was the equitable owner of the land in controversy, and that these objections were overruled by the federal court, and the discharge granted. This question has also been determined against the contention of appellant in the case of *Paxton v. Scott*, 66 Neb. 385, in which it was held that the question of fraud in conveyances made prior to July 1, 1898, could not be determined in a hearing on application by a bankrupt for his discharge in the bankrupt proceedings. The conveyances in the instant case were made in 1895. Consequently, even if fraudulently made, such fact would not prevent the bankrupt from having his discharge in the federal court. Again, as further held in *Paxton v. Scott*, *supra*, "the discharge of a bankrupt is only personal to himself, and does not affect any lien, either by contract or by judicial proceedings, against property."

The only question then remaining is as to the sufficiency of the evidence to support the judgment. We have made a careful examination of the evidence contained in the bill of exceptions for the purpose of arriving at an independent conclusion on the question of the good faith of the transfer from the husband to the wife. In the first place, the relationship existing between the parties rendered the transfer of practically all of the available assets of the grantor presumptively fraudulent as to existing creditors. While there is a suggestion in the evidence offered by defendant that David Hanlon owned other property of a personal nature at the time of the transfer, yet nothing is pointed out which it is conceded that he did own, except some sort of a land contract in the state of Colorado, which is admitted to have been of the value of \$60, and which is all the property that actually passed into the

hands of the trustee. The evidence of defendant shows that they removed to Nebraska in the year 1884; that the quarter section of land now occupied by them as a home-stead was purchased by the husband; and that a deed to it was made in his name, but it is claimed that the purchase price was paid by money which the wife procured from her father, that is, that she got \$1,100, and purchased the home quarter section with this sum, subject to a mortgage of \$1,000. About eleven years later another quarter section was purchased for the sum of \$3,000. This purchase was effected by the payment of \$1,000 in cash, and the execution of a mortgage for \$2,000 which still remains upon the land. Defendant claims that the \$1,000 paid on the purchase was procured from the home quarter, which in reality belonged to the wife. This second quarter was deeded to the husband, and mortgaged by him to secure the remainder of the purchase price. It is likewise claimed that the third quarter was paid for by sale of stock and grain raised on the home place. Appellant admits that she knew that all this land was held in the name of the husband; that she knew that he was buying and selling stock, and depositing the funds in the bank in his own name; that he had been farming on lands leased in his own name prior to the conveyance to her. She also admits that she knew he was in debt when he made the conveyance to her. With reference to this fact, her testimony is as follows:

Q. You say, when you learned that Mr. Hanlon was signing notes as surety, you demanded that the farms be put in your name?

A. I demanded that they were mine, and that I wanted them.

Q. You wanted the farms in your name?

A. I wanted my property.

Q. Because you learned that he was involved?

A. Because I learned that he was signing notes for everybody, and that he was prey for 'most anybody that wanted to prey on him, and I wanted my place to keep my home there. * * *

A. I demanded that they be put in my name, because it was mine, and I wanted it, so that he wouldn't run through with it.

We think, in view of this testimony, that the evidence is amply sufficient to sustain the judgment of the trial court, and we therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and LETTON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the above opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

WILLOW SPRINGS IRRIGATION DISTRICT V. JAMES WILSON.

FILED JUNE 22, 1905. No. 13,829.

1. **Irrigation: PRELIMINARY WORK.** An irrigation district may contract with a competent engineer to survey and furnish plans for the construction of a proposed canal, and from which the board of directors of the district may estimate the cost thereof and the amount of bonds to be voted therefor. Such work is preliminary to the work of construction, and the expense thereof is not to be paid out of the construction fund.
2. **Corporation: ACTION: PRESUMPTION.** In an action against a corporation based on a contract, the presumption obtains that the contract is within the power of the corporation to make, and that the officers executing it on behalf of the corporation acted within the law, unless the petition states facts showing the contrary.
3. ———: ———. Where a claim has been rejected or disallowed in part by the auditing board of a corporation, an original action may be instituted on the claim, in the absence of a statute directing other proceedings to enforce it.

ERROR to the district court for Garfield county: JAMES N. PAUL, JUDGE. Affirmed.

A. M. Robbins, for plaintiff in error.

E. J. Clements and V. O. Johnson, contra,

DUFFIE, C.

The petition in this case alleges that the defendant is an irrigation district duly organized under the laws of this state; that on November 20, 1895, soon after its organization, and for the purpose of enabling its directors to determine the amount of money necessary to be raised for the purpose of constructing an irrigation canal and acquiring the necessary property and rights therefor, it entered into a written contract with the plaintiff, by the terms of which it agreed to employ the plaintiff as engineer of said irrigation district, and to pay him for his services the sum of \$5.50 a day for the time he was actually engaged in said services. A copy of the contract is attached to the petition. It is further alleged that the plaintiff performed 93½ days' services for the defendant in making the surveys and plans for an irrigation canal and works for said district, and estimates of the cost of constructing the same, which survey, plans and estimates were accepted and adopted by the district; that on May 21, 1896, plaintiff presented to the defendant his account and claim for services amounting to \$512.87, and the board of directors of the district audited said account and allowed only \$350 on the same; that defendant neglected and refused to pay the amount due plaintiff for his services, or any part thereof, and he asks judgment for the amount of his claim, with 7 per cent. interest from April 30, 1896. A demurrer was filed to this petition, which was overruled, and thereupon the defendant answered. A trial was had to the court, resulting in a judgment for the plaintiff below for the sum of \$305.25, with interest from November 20, 1896, at 7 per cent. per annum, making altogether \$458. The defendant has brought the case to this court by petition in error, but has failed to file a bill of exceptions showing the evidence taken on the trial. In this condition of the case we can only examine the pleadings to determine whether they support the judgment entered,

It is vigorously contended by the plaintiff in error that the petition does not state a cause of action, and that it discloses facts avoiding the cause of action. The agreement made between the parties contains this stipulation: "The party of the second part further agrees to wait for the \$5.50 per day, the consideration above named, until the same can be paid out of the first tax levy on said district, provided the same is paid within one year from date." It is urged that the district could not enter into any contract relating to the construction of the ditch until the funds had been provided to cover the expense, and *School District v. Stough*, 4 Neb. 357, *Markey v. School District*, 58 Neb. 479, and *Pomerene v. School District*, 56 Neb. 126, are cited in support of this contention. These cases were all based upon a statute which prohibits a school district from contracting for buildings and the furnishing of school houses until the fund therefor is provided, and unless the statute relating to irrigation districts contains a like prohibition the authorities cited are not applicable. Section 24, article III, chapter 93a, Compiled Statutes, 1903 (Ann. St. 6846), provides that "the cost and expense of purchasing and acquiring property and constructing the works and improvements herein provided for, shall be wholly paid out of the construction fund, or in the bonds of said district at their par value.

* * * For the purpose of defraying the expense of the organization of the district, and the care, operation, management, repair, and improvement of such portions of said canal and works as are completed and in use, including salaries of officers and employees, the board may either fix rates of tolls and charges, and collect the same from all persons using said canal for irrigation or other purposes, or may provide for the payment of said expenditures by a levy of assessments therefor, or by both said tolls and assessments." These provisions make it plain that the construction funds can be used only in purchasing and acquiring property for the canal, and constructing the same, and this was the construction given

Willow Springs Irrigation District v. Wilson.

the section by this court in *Lincoln & Dawson County Irrigation District v. McNeal*, 60 Neb. 613. Section 13 makes it the duty of the board of directors, as soon after the organization of the district as practicable, to estimate and determine the amount of money necessary to be raised for the purpose of constructing the necessary canals and works, and acquiring the necessary property rights therefor, and otherwise carrying out the provisions of the act. It is evident that capable civil engineers will not be found among the directors of all the irrigation districts formed under the provisions of this act, and it is quite apparent that no estimate of any real value can be made by one not a civil engineer. It is a necessity, therefore, in order to obtain the approximate cost of the proposed work, that a civil engineer should be employed to run the line, and to ascertain as nearly as possible the amount of funds necessary to be raised for carrying on and completing the work. This was the opinion of the supreme court of California in *Cullen v. Glendora Water Co.*, 113 Cal. 503, 526, 39 Pac. 769, in construing a similar statute. In that case it is said:

"While I am inclined to the opinion that the statutory requirements that an estimate must be made implies that it must be made by a competent engineer upon such plans or data as that it may be approximately correct, and that it should be recorded in the office of the district, or otherwise made accessible to all parties interested, it is not necessary so to decide in this case." On rehearing, reported in 113 Cal. 503, 510, 45 Pac. 822, it was said: "We think that the language of the act (St. 1891, p. 147, sec. 15) clearly implies that there must be some plan or plans in the alternative, before an estimate can be made, and that without such plan or plans there can be no real estimate."

The object of the statute under consideration was undoubtedly to allow the people of the district to examine and know the plan of the proposed improvement, and the estimated cost thereof, before they incurred the burden of

the indebtedness necessary to complete the proposed works; and it is necessary, in order to prepare any definite plan and to obtain any reliable estimate, that the services of an engineer should be secured. This is all to be done before bonds are voted or any tax laid. The expense is not incurred in the construction of the canal, but in obtaining information necessary to the voters of the district, in order that they may act intelligently upon the question, and say whether they will enter upon the construction at all or not. In our opinion, the contract in question is not only one that the district might enter into, but which it was necessary to make under the provisions of the law.

It is further urged that, as an irrigation district is a body of limited powers, in a suit brought upon a contract made by the district, the petition should allege that the corporation had power to make the contract sued on, and that it was made at a regular meeting of the board of directors, or some special meeting called for that purpose. The general rule is that, in actions against a corporation upon a contract, it is not necessary to allege either that the corporation had power under its charter or governing statute to enter into the contract or that its officers by whom the contract was made in its behalf were duly empowered or authorized thereto. These are matters of defense. In *Montague v. Church School District*, 34 N. J. L. 218, a suit upon a note of the school district, the court said:

"In declaring on a promissory note, it is not necessary to aver that in its creation the corporate body which gave it acted within its power. It is sufficient for the holder to declare upon the instrument as the act of the defendants, and if it be *ultra vires*, he will fail upon the trial of the cause."

So in *Red Willow County v. Davis*, 49 Neb. 796, it was held that, "where a petition alleges and a demurrer admits that the plaintiff was employed by the county board to render professional services as a physician for a

Willow Springs Irrigation District v. Wilson.

pauper, the presumption will be indulged that the county board kept within the law in employing the physician, and that a poorhouse had, prior to that time, been established and opened in said county for the reception of its paupers."

It is also insisted that the only remedy available to the plaintiff below for the collection of his claim is by presenting the same to the defendant's board of directors, and obtaining its allowance in whole or in part by said board; that as he presented it for allowance and the board made an order awarding him \$350 for his service, and the statute not providing for an appeal from such order, it is final and conclusive, and no action can be maintained on the original claim. We know of no rule which precludes a party from maintaining an action against a corporation, public or private, where its proper auditing board has refused to allow the claim in whole or in part. It is true that the holder of a claim against a county must present it to the county board, and appeal to the district court from an order rejecting the claim; but this is so only because the statute has provided that mode of procedure, and, in the absence of the statute, suit might be instituted against the county in the first instance.

We find no reversible error in the record, and recommend an affirmance of the judgment.

JACKSON, C., concurs. ALBERT, C., not sitting.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

SEDGWICK, J., not sitting.

CHRISTINA COPPOM, APPELLANT, v. ROBERT FORMAN,
APPELLEE.

FILED JUNE 22, 1905. No. 13,843.

Pleadings and evidence examined, and held to require an affirmance of the decree of the district court.

APPEAL from the district court for Furnas county:
ROBERT C. ORR, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

W. S. Morlan, for appellant.

E. B. Perry and John T. McClure, contra.

DUFFIE, C.

The amended petition in this case alleges that the plaintiff is the owner and in possession of the northwest quarter of section 20, in township 4, range 24, in Furnas county, Nebraska, and that the defendant is the owner of the southwest quarter of said section. It is further alleged that plaintiff, with her husband, settled upon and made claim to said land in 1879 under the preemption law of the United States; and that in 1882 Adolph Coppom, the husband, made final proof, and obtained a receiver's final receipt therefor; and that in February, 1885, a patent was duly issued to him for said northwest quarter; that in 1894 the plaintiff and her husband conveyed the land to Andrew Ruben, which conveyance was for the purpose of vesting title in the plaintiff, and that in May, 1897, Ruben and wife conveyed the same to her; that Adolph Coppom died in May, 1897; that plaintiff has always lived on said land from date of settlement thereon, occupying the same to what is called the "original quarter corner" on the west side of said section 20. It is further stated that in June, 1900, D. S. Hasty, the then county surveyor of Furnas county, made a pretended survey of sections 19 and 20 in the above township and range,

and set a stone on the line between said section 16 rods north of the point which had for more than 20 years prior thereto been known and recognized as the original quarter corner between said sections, and which said stone is now known as the "Hasty quarter corner"; that after the establishment of the Hasty quarter corner the defendant entered upon the tract of land in dispute, moved a building thereon, and constructed a fence across the tract, removing a fence which the plaintiff had placed thereon. Plaintiff removed the fence built by defendant when he began to erect another one, and commenced cutting and harvesting the grass growing upon the land. In the original petition a temporary injunction was prayed and issued, and the prayer of the amended petition is that the injunction be made perpetual; that defendant may be enjoined from trespassing upon the land in dispute, and from building or maintaining any buildings thereon, and from interfering with or removing any fence erected by the plaintiff, or any of the crops on said land; and that plaintiff's title to said tract be quieted, and defendant adjudged to have no interest therein.

It is quite apparent from the allegations of the petition, and the evidence on the trial makes it certain, that after the Hasty survey, which located the quarter corner 16 rods north of what the plaintiff claims to be the original quarter corner established by the government survey between sections 19 and 20, the defendant took possession of the disputed tract containing about 16 acres, moved a building thereon, and erected a fence along what he claimed to be the boundary line between himself and the plaintiff, and that he was in the actual possession of the tract at the time of the commencement of this action. The facts in this case as to possession by defendant are not substantially different from those alleged in the petition in *Warlier v. Williams*, 53 Neb. 143, in which it was said that "a plaintiff is not entitled to a mandatory injunction to remove from real estate one who has without color of title unlawfully and forcibly entered and wrongfully re-

mains thereon, though such trespasser be insolvent." If the action was based solely upon the plaintiff's claim that this disputed strip of 16 acres was part of the northwest quarter of section 20, we would have no hesitation in dismissing the plaintiff's petition, and remitting her to her action at law to recover possession of the premises. But the plaintiff asserts a claim of title to the disputed land by adverse possession, and, under the rule in this state, an action to quiet title may be maintained by any party, whether in or out of possession of the premises, against another asserting an adverse claim. *Foree v. Stubbs*, 41 Neb. 271; *Hall v. Hooper*, 47 Neb. 111; *Eayrs v. Nason*, 54 Neb. 143; *Ross v. McManigal*, 61 Neb. 90. This phase of the case requires us to examine the evidence and determine therefrom the location of the original quarter corner on the west side of section 20, and the plaintiff's claim to have occupied the land south to the point which she now claims to be the original quarter corner for the statutory period. In June, 1888, Joseph S. Phebus, county surveyor, made a survey of at least a part of the line between sections 19 and 20, and either placed or found a stone at a point which he established as the quarter corner on the west side of section 20. The field notes of this survey show that he commenced at the government corner common to sections 19, 20, 29 and 30, running north 40 chains and 26 links to the quarter section corner between 19 and 20, where he found an old stake and set a stone 10 by 5 by 2 to perpetuate the corner; thence north 44 chains and 28 links to the corner of sections 17, 18, 19 and 20, where were a mound and pit. This survey was made at the request of J. Higgins and Adolph Coppom. Mr. Higgins testified upon the trial that the survey commenced at the common corners of sections 19, 20, 29 and 30, and ran thence north one-half mile, where Coppom took a spade and uncovered a stone; and, while the field notes of the survey made by Phebus show that the survey was continued to the northwest corner of section 20, Higgins testified that the north half mile was not surveyed.

His testimony regarding that is as follows: "He only surveyed half up the section; I asked to run it on through and have the corner located, but he said it was not necessary, that was all it was necessary to do."

The evidence is quite conclusive to our minds that the original government quarter corner on the west side of section 20 is something like 16 or 18 rods south of where the plaintiff claims that Phebus established it, and in the immediate vicinity of what is called the "Hasty quarter corner." Lawrence D. Carroll, a witness for the defendant, was well acquainted with the premises in the year 1873, and was asked this question: "Going back now to 1873, when you said you found the government corners, I will ask you if at that time you found government landmarks, so that you could determine the lines between the southwest quarter and the northwest quarter of said sections? A. Yes, sir. The whole country was surveyed in 1870, and perhaps it would be a mound 18 inches high, and you could see them for a long way all over the country." It is clear that the government pit and mounds would be very distinct for a period of three years or more after they were made, and Mr. Carroll locates the point at which the government quarter corner on the west side of section 20 was located as from 18 to 20 rods north of the point which plaintiff claims as her southwest corner. He states that there is a row of cottonwood trees about on the line between the two quarters, and about where the government line runs and 18 or 20 rods north of the line as now claimed by the plaintiff. Carroll further testified that Charles Twist occupied the southwest quarter of section 20 in the fall of 1873; that he helped him build a house on the land during that fall. He also states that the fence now claimed by plaintiff to be on the boundary line between the two quarters is from 18 to 20 rods south of where he knew the government quarter corner to be. One Morrill, who worked for the Coppoms in 1882 and 1883, testified that Coppom planted a row of cottonwood trees on his south line during the time he was in his em-

ploy; that, when preparing to plant the trees, Coppom directed him to ride over to the corner and stand there until they got a furrow plowed to plant the trees in, telling him where the corner was. It was then marked by a fence and a stone, and he stood at this corner, which we understand to be the corner in dispute, while the furrow was run. He claims to be well acquainted with the land, and says that the corner now claimed by Mrs. Coppom is close to 20 rods south of the place where he was directed to stand. G. B. Misner testified that he cut hay on the southwest quarter of the section in 1890; that he had a conversation with Adolph Coppom relating to the north line of that quarter, and that Coppom showed him three or four rows of cottonwood trees as marking the line; that these trees are about 18 rods north of where plaintiff now claims the line to be. One Bolinbaugh testified that Adolph Coppom told him at one time that he had established his corner about 14 rods to the south, so as to get more alfalfa land. There is evidence on behalf of the plaintiff that her fence and the line claimed by her is that established by the Phebus survey of 1888, but, in our judgment, the immovable monuments shown to have existed on the southwest quarter since 1873, such as the Twist sod house which was erected in that year, the cottonwood trees planted by Adolph Coppom himself on what he then claimed to be his south line, the fact that this quarter corner was well known by one or more of the witnesses at an early date, and while the government corner established by the government survey was plain and distinct, all lead us to the conclusion that there has been a gradual encroachment by the plaintiff and her husband upon the southwest corner of the section, and that the land in dispute is a part of the southwest quarter. We are better satisfied with this conclusion as it agrees with that of the district court, who had an opportunity to hear and see most of the witnesses who gave evidence in the case, and a much better opportunity to judge of their candor and truthfulness than have

Powell v. New Omaha Thomson-Houston Electric Light Co.

we, who are only allowed to read a cold and impassive record.

The amended petition in this case was filed March 28, 1902, but there is nothing in the record to show us when the original petition was filed and the action commenced. We think that the weight of evidence is to the effect that no claim was made to the land in dispute by the plaintiff or her husband prior to the fall of 1890, when Misner cut hay upon the southwest quarter. Whether this action was commenced prior to the fall of 1900, or after that, we cannot know, as the original petition and the summons issued and served are not contained in the transcript. It is impossible therefore for us to tell whether the action was commenced within ten years from the fall of 1890, or whether ten years by which title by adverse possession could be acquired had expired since Coppom pointed out his south line to Misner. Being without exact data to determine this question, we accept the finding of the district court, and recommend the affirmance of the decree.

JACKSON, C., concurs. ALBERT, C., not sitting.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the decree of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

SEDGWICK, J., not sitting.

**HENRY Z. POWELL V. NEW OMAHA THOMSON-HOUSTON
ELECTRIC LIGHT COMPANY.**

FILED JUNE 22, 1905. No. 13,861.

Action for Personal Injuries: NEGLIGENCE. The Union Pacific Railroad Company and the New Omaha Thomson-Houston Electric Light Company both occupied the north part of Jones street between Ninth and Twelfth streets by permission of the proper authorities of the city of Omaha, one with a spur track for the receipt

Powell v. New Omaha Thomson-Houston Electric Light Co.

and delivery of freight, the other with poles for carrying its wires. The electric light company erected its poles some time after the railroad company had laid its track, and the poles were so placed as to stand only 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches from the ladder of a box car being moved over the spur track. The plaintiff, an employee of a cold storage company, was directed by his employer to go to this spur track and lock the door of a car containing goods consigned to the storage company. On arriving at the track he found that the car, with others, was being moved toward the west end of the spur by those in charge of a switch engine of the railroad company. He ascended part way up the ladder on the side, and stood there until the car reached one of the poles of the electric light company, where he was caught between the car and the pole, and injured. On the trial of an action brought by him against the electric light company for damages, the district court directed a verdict for the defendant. *Held*, That under the circumstances he could not recover, and the direction of the court was proper.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: WILLIAM A. REDICK, JUDGE. *Affirmed*.

Baldrige & De-Bord, for plaintiff in error.

Greene, Breckenridge & Kinsler, contra.

DUFFIE, C.

The defendant in error, the New Omaha Thomson-Houston Electric Light Company, hereafter spoken of as the defendant, is a corporation organized for the purpose of generating and furnishing electric power and lights, and for some years has been engaged in that business in the city of Omaha. In the conduct of its business it has, by permission of the city of Omaha, erected poles in certain of the streets and alleys of the city, upon which wires are strung to convey the electric current from the place where generated to the place of use. Its poles are set along the north side of Jones street. The Union Pacific Railroad Company, by permission of the city of Omaha, occupies the north part of Jones street with a spur track, the better to accommodate the warehouses and wholesale establishments situated on the north side of the street.

The tracks of the Union Pacific Railroad Company were laid and being used on Jones street for a long time prior to the time when defendant obtained permission to erect or erected any poles in said street, and when the poles were erected they were placed so near the railroad track that the rungs of the ladder of a passing box car were only 9½ inches from the poles. The poles had been set, however, a long time previous to the accident complained of. The above facts are stated with much detail in the petition, and it is further alleged that the defendant knew that railroad box cars usually had ladders on the outside, made of iron rungs placed on the side of the car, one above the other, to enable persons to ride thereon or to mount to the top of the car, and that, knowing these facts, and that cars were from time to time propelled along said spur track, and that the car ladders were used by persons for the purpose of riding thereon and for ascending to the top of the car, it recklessly and negligently erected its poles in close proximity to the track, as above stated. The petition contains these further allegations detailing the manner of the plaintiff's injury for which the action was brought. "The plaintiff further alleges that on said 10th day of July, 1903, while employed by the Omaha Cold Storage Company, he was directed and ordered by the foreman of said company to lock one of the box cars filled with merchandise consigned to the said storage company, and of which merchandise said company had charge of the delivery; that, in pursuance of said directions, the plaintiff went from the place of business of the said storage company to Ninth street, for the purpose of locking said car, and that, before the plaintiff arrived at said place, the train to which said car was attached began to move westward in the direction of the place of business of the said storage company; that thereupon the plaintiff, at the corner of Ninth and Jones streets, jumped upon the rungs of the iron ladder on the northwest corner of a car attached to said train, and on the north side of said corner, without seeing or knowing of the close proximity of said

poles to said car, and without any negligence on his part, and that plaintiff rode upon said car until said car approached one of said poles that was $9\frac{3}{4}$ inches away from the iron rungs of the ladder on said box car where said plaintiff was standing; that as the car passed one of said poles the plaintiff, not being able to save or protect himself from injury, was struck by said pole, and violently and with great force was knocked from the position in which he was standing on the rung of the ladder on the north side of said box car to the ground, and was crushed on his side, hip and body and limbs, and injured internally, and in such a permanent way that he will never recover from the effects thereof; that the plaintiff was not guilty of negligence in riding on the ladder of said car, and could not, with the exercise of ordinary care, have foreseen said danger, and did not know of the close proximity of said pole to said car." Judgment in the sum of \$30,000 was prayed.

After the plaintiff had introduced his evidence and rested, the defendant moved for a directed verdict in its favor upon the following grounds: "First. That the petition does not state facts sufficient to constitute a cause of action. Second. That the evidence fails to establish any duty owed by the defendant to the plaintiff which was breached. Third. The evidence fails to establish any actionable negligence upon the part of the defendant which resulted in the injury to the plaintiff. Fourth. If the pole with which the plaintiff came in contact while riding on the side of a box car, and which threw him off the car on which he was riding, was negligently placed in the position that it occupied, and on the day of the injury, such negligence is not the proximate cause of the injury to the plaintiff. Fifth. The testimony shows that the injury to the plaintiff resulted from his own negligence." The court sustained the motion. A verdict for the defendant was accordingly returned by the jury, upon which judgment was entered. A motion for a new trial being overruled, plaintiff has taken error to this court.

A great share of the plaintiff's brief is devoted to showing that a person charged with negligently inflicting an injury upon another cannot defend upon the ground that the person injured was at the time a trespasser upon the lands or property of a third party. This argument assumes that the defendant seeks to escape liability upon the ground that the plaintiff was a trespasser upon the car of the railroad company at the time of his injury, and that it was his trespass, and not the alleged negligent act of the defendant in setting the pole, that caused the injury. The law, we think, is well settled that one who wilfully or negligently injures another cannot defend upon the ground that the party injured was trespassing upon some third party. It will not do to say that one who carelessly and negligently shoots and wounds another can escape liability by showing that the injured party was trespassing upon the premises or property of a third party. But we do not understand that the defense is based at all upon this theory, or that the court, in instructing a verdict against the plaintiff, accepted that view of the law. As we understand the position of the defendant and of the trial court, it is that the defendant owed no duty to any person using the street to see that he did not collide with the pole. The question is not whether the plaintiff was a trespasser upon the car of the railroad company, but whether a person who places an inanimate object in the street by permission of the municipal authorities, so that it is lawfully there, is liable to another person for damages sustained by him in consequence of a collision between such person and the inanimate object. It being conceded that the defendant had permission from the city of Omaha to erect its poles along Jones street where the collision occurred, it must be assumed that it erected the poles under the direction of the city, and at the several points in the street designated or permitted by the officers of the municipality. Such being the case, can the plaintiff, or any other citizen or person using the street, maintain an action against the company on account of being

brought in collision with the pole? Inanimate objects occupying a street by permission of the municipal authority have as much right there as an individual lawfully using it. The tracks of a street railway company, shade trees, platforms of wholesale and warehouse establishments, the poles of public utility companies, each and all have the right to occupy the street under permission and control of the municipality. Those erecting poles or planting shade trees by permission and direction of the city are guilty of no negligence in so doing, and as the pole or the tree cannot possibly injure a person using the street, except through a collision brought about through some other agency than the action of the party in planting them, the latter owed no duty to any person using the street. When they plant the tree or set the pole in a secure manner, they have performed their whole duty, for no possible injury can result to parties using the street, except through the active agency or active force of another. To state it briefly, the pole or tree has as much right to be in the street as the individual or vehicle, or any other thing lawfully on the street. In the case we are considering, the injury complained of resulted from a collision, but in that collision the pole was a passive and irresponsible agent. It was the active force of the railroad company in moving the car upon which the plaintiff had placed himself that caused the collision and the injury. If the plaintiff was upon the car with the knowledge and assent of those in charge of the same, and they knew of his exposed position and of his danger of collision with the pole, it may be that he might have an action against the company; but, in our opinion, he has no greater right of action against the defendant, who committed no trespass, but was acting lawfully in placing the pole where it did, than would one walking along the street have against the owner of a lot, who had planted a shade tree by permission of the city, for an injury occasioned by a collision with such tree. The plaintiff is simply one of the public, and can claim no rights or pro-

Powell v. New Omaha Thomson-Houston Electric Light Co.

tection in the use of Jones street that might not be claimed by another citizen. Had he been walking or driving on Jones street, and run into the pole, he could not recover against the defendant, as the collision would be the result of his own act. But further than this, the plaintiff, when injured, was not using the street as one of the public. He had abandoned his rights therein and whatever protection was due him in that capacity, when he left the street and boarded the car of the railroad company. In mounting the car he stepped from the street upon the moving premises of the company, and when he did this he voluntarily placed himself in a position where he necessarily surrendered control of his own movements so long as he remained on the car. In mounting the car and remaining there, he voluntarily surrendered himself to the control of the force which was moving it. He voluntarily put himself in a position where he could no longer avoid contact with the pole. Had he remained upon the street in the character of one using the street, he could have avoided the collision, but when he mounted the car he ceased to have control over his movements. It will not do to say that, where the city gives a railway company the right to run its cars through a street, any chance pedestrian who boards a train is using the street as a citizen, and entitled to all the privileges and protection incident to such character. Under the circumstances of this case the defendant owed the plaintiff, as one of the public, no greater duty while riding on the car than it owed him had he been walking or driving upon the street. It owed no duty to the railroad company, because that company had acquiesced for years in the use of the street granted by the city to the defendant, and operated its cars thereon with full knowledge of the dangers incident to the services performed by its employees in control of passing cars. It had no greater right in the street than had the defendant. Both were there by permission. In all probability the railroad company had anticipated the danger of collision from this pole, and had warned its employees to guard

against it. That would probably be its duty, and its duty to anyone whom it commanded or knowingly allowed to ride in the position which plaintiff occupied. But neither the defendant nor the city owed any duty to the plaintiff to notify him of the position of the pole. Had he walked or ran against it in the broad light of day, such collision would be the result of his own carelessness, because, the pole being in plain view, he must take notice of it. The fact that he left the street and mounted the car did not add to the duty of the city or of the defendant to protect him by notice of the location of the pole. He was charged with notice of its location to the same extent that he is charged with notice of the location of a lamp-post erected by the city, and this is true whether he is using the street as a traveler thereon or as a traveler on board a passing railroad car.

It is quite plain to us that no charge of negligence can be laid to the defendant in the erection of these poles, unless it owes to every citizen the duty to guard him from contact with every pole which it erects in the street, and this duty we do not think exists. When defendant maintains its poles in a safe and sound condition at the point directed by the city authorities, it has performed its whole duty to those using the streets, and, if collision with these poles is brought about by the voluntary act of the party or by some uncontrollable force, the defendant is not liable.

We think the court was right in directing a verdict for the defendant and entering judgment thereon, and recommend an affirmance of the judgment.

JACKSON, C., concurs. ALBERT, C., not sitting.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

PETER HANSON V. FRANK PAUL NATHAN.

FILED JUNE 22, 1905. No. 13,873.

Review: MOTION FOR NEW TRIAL. The rule is well settled that the supreme court will not review a judgment of the district court on a petition in error as to errors occurring at the trial, unless the alleged errors are first called to the attention of the trial court by a motion for a new trial. *Smith v. Spaulding*, 24 Neb. 128.

ERROR to the district court for Cuming county: CONRAD HOLLENBECK, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

A. R. Oleson, for plaintiff in error.

McNish & Graham, contra.

DUFFIE, C.

Hanson, plaintiff in error, owns the northwest quarter of section 33, township 24, range 5, in Cuming county, Nebraska. Nathan, defendant in error, is the owner of the northeast quarter of the same section. A survey establishing the boundary line between these two quarter sections was run and established in the year 1870, and the present owners, and those through whom they claim title, occupied the lands up to the line thus established down to the year 1901. About this time a controversy arose between Hanson and Nathan relating to this boundary line, and Hanson procured a survey of the premises to be made by the county surveyor of Cuming county in the early summer of 1902, which survey established the line some distance east of that which had theretofore been recognized as the true boundary. After this last survey Hanson commenced the erection of a fence along the line established by the last survey, which he completed in March, 1903, and took possession of the disputed strip, and thereupon Nathan commenced this action in equity to restrain

Hanson from trespassing upon his premises. An injunction was issued by the county judge of Cuming county which, on motion of Hanson, was dissolved by the district judge, upon the ground that the relief claimed was the possession of a strip of land in dispute between the owners, the title of which had not been established in a court of law. After the dissolution of the injunction Hanson filed an answer, to which Nathan replied, and in his reply prayed for a decree quieting his title to the premises in dispute. Hanson moved to strike this reply from the files upon the ground that it sought to incorporate a new and independent cause of action not set out in the petition. This motion was overruled, and thereupon Nathan asked and obtained leave to amend the prayer of his petition by adding thereto a prayer to quiet his title to the strip in dispute. Leave was given to so amend the prayer of the petition, to which Hanson objected, and the court announced that the trial would proceed as an action to quiet title, the case being set for trial the following day. Hanson thereupon moved for a continuance, supporting his motion by a showing to the effect that, because the action was to proceed as one to quiet title, different proof would be necessary, which required time to procure. This motion was overruled and the trial proceeded, resulting in a decree quieting title to the disputed premises in the plaintiff, Nathan. Hanson has brought the case here by petition in error, but, under the well-established rules of this court, no motion for a new trial being filed in the district court, we can only examine the pleadings and the decree entered to ascertain whether the decree is supported by the pleadings on which the case proceeded to trial. *Zehr v. Miller*, 40 Neb. 791; *Harrington v. Latta*, 23 Neb. 84; *Schmid v. Schmid*, 37 Neb. 629; *County of Lancaster v. Lincoln Packing Co.*, 5 Neb. (Unof.) 521; *Hansen v. Kinney*, 46 Neb. 207.

It is objected that the petition does not contain any allegation to the effect that Hanson was asserting an adverse claim of ownership, or that his acts constituted a

cloud upon Nathan's title. It is probably true that the petition is barren of facts entitling the plaintiff, on a strict construction, to a decree quieting his title, but all the pleadings taken together clearly show that Hanson was asserting title to the premises in dispute as against the claim of Nathan. His answer alleges that he is the owner and in possession of the northwest quarter, and that this disputed strip is a part of said quarter section; and the reply alleges "that, under and by virtue of the claim of said defendant to said strip of land in question, there is a cloud cast upon the title of plaintiff's land." As a rule, the failure of a petition to allege the necessary facts to constitute a cause of action cannot be supplied by statements in the reply, and if the motion made by Hanson directed against the reply had been to strike therefrom statements that should have been set out in the petition, it would undoubtedly have been sustained, but the motion was to strike the reply from the files, and as it contained matter denying several allegations of the defendant's answer, the motion was properly overruled, and the allegations of the reply may now be considered in aid of the defective petition. *Farmers & Merchants Ins. Co. v. Dobney*, 62 Neb. 213; *Gregory v. Kuar*, 36 Neb. 533. So, also, a defective petition may be aided by statements contained in the defendant's answer. *Railway Officials & Employees Accident Ass'n v. Drummond*, 56 Neb. 235, in which the following appears: "A petition which is defective by reason of the omission of material facts therefrom will be aided and cured by the averment of such facts in the answer."

The objection that a trial by jury was denied the defendant cannot be sustained in the absence of a motion for a new trial. The same objection was made in *Loice v. Riley*, 57 Neb. 260, and the court said: "Again, if the district court erred in denying the appellants a jury for a trial of the issues in this proceeding, that was an error of law which occurred at the trial and cannot be reviewed on appeal, but only on petition in error." This, of course,

means that the question should have been raised in the trial court by a motion for a new trial. Some of the rulings of the trial court, especially the refusal to grant a continuance, were probably prejudicial to the defendant, and this ruling, if properly presented to that court by a motion for a new trial, would incline us to reverse the judgment entered; but, as before stated, no opportunity was given the trial court to correct any of the alleged errors, and, following the rule, from which there has been no variation in this court, that errors of law occurring upon the trial cannot be reviewed in the absence of a motion for a new trial, we recommend an affirmance of the decree.

JACKSON, C., concurs. ALBERT, C., not sitting.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the decree of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

SEDGWICK, J., not sitting.

CHARLES A. MORRILL V. RUTH MCNEILL.

FILED JUNE 22, 1905. No. 14,138.

1. **Review: INSTRUCTIONS.** Where a case has been reversed and remanded, with directions to the trial court to submit certain issues to the jury, and the case is tried a second time on the same issues made by the pleadings on the first trial, this court, on a second appeal, will examine and pass upon the correctness of the instructions of the trial court in submitting to the jury the issues which the court was directed to try and determine, notwithstanding a claim made on behalf of the defendant in error that error in such instructions is without prejudice to the plaintiff in error because of a former adjudication of such issues asserted by the defendant in error.
2. **Ratification of Settlement: INSTRUCTIONS.** The plaintiff pleaded the ratification by the defendant of a settlement made between him-

Morrill v. McNeill.

self and the defendant's husband, and produced competent evidence tending to prove such ratification. The court instructed the jury to the effect that, if they found that the defendant had ratified the settlement, they should find for the plaintiff, but failed to state what acts on the part of the plaintiff would amount to a ratification, and refused a proper instruction covering the question asked by the plaintiff. *Held*, Error.

3. **Trial: THEORY OF CASE.** Where the court and the parties to the action proceed in the trial of a case on the theory that the pleadings present a certain material issue not jurisdictional in its nature, this court will not on appeal examine the pleadings to determine their sufficiency to clearly make the issue.

ERROR to the district court for Logan county: **ROBERT C. ORR, JUDGE.** *Reversed.*

Wilcox & Halligan, for plaintiff in error.

Hoagland & Hoagland, *contra.*

DUFFIE, C.

This is an appeal from a judgment entered in favor of Ruth McNeill on a second trial of the case. The opinion of the court on the former appeal is found in 3 Neb. (Unof.) 220, where a full statement of the facts is given. The errors complained of by Morrill are that the court failed to properly submit to the jury the question of a ratification of the settlement made between Morrill and Allen McNeill after the property in question had been taken on the writ of replevin. On behalf of Mrs. McNeill it is urged that her plea of *res judicata* is fully sustained by the record and the evidence, and that the only questions which should have been submitted to the jury were the amount and value of the property claimed by her; that, in this view of the case, errors of the court in instructing the jury on other issues made are immaterial, such errors, if they exist, being without prejudice to the plaintiff in error. As we understand the record, the pleadings have not been changed or amended since the first trial. The issues were therefore the same. On the

former appeal the case was reversed and remanded for another trial because the court had failed to submit to the jury the question of the alleged settlement, and the ratification thereof by Mrs. McNeill. This is conclusively shown by the language of the former opinion, from which we quote:

"It is apparent that the only question submitted to the jury was that of the right to the possession of the property as between plaintiff in error and the defendants in error at the time the replevin action was instituted. No evidence was offered by plaintiff in error upon the merits of the controversy as presented at the commencement of the action, but the supplemental petition and all the evidence offered by plaintiff in error related solely to the settlement. It is, therefore, clear that the issue presented by plaintiff in error in his supplemental petition, and supported by the evidence offered by him, is entirely taken from the consideration of the jury. We do not express an opinion as to the weight of the evidence offered by plaintiff in error tending to establish the settlement pleaded, or tending to establish the authority of Allen McNeill to represent his wife in such settlement; nor upon the evidence tending to show that the wife had full knowledge of the terms of such settlement, and accepted the benefits thereof, failing to question it for more than two years after it was consummated. But we do say that sufficient competent evidence was offered by plaintiff in error and received by the trial court to require the submission of the question under proper instructions to the jury. The rule is well settled in this state that a party is entitled to have his theory of a case, if it is supported by the pleadings and proof, submitted to the jury. * * * For error of the trial court in withdrawing from the jury the question as to the existence and validity of the settlement pleaded, it is recommended that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings."

It will be seen, therefore, that the case was remanded

with directions to the trial court to submit the question of settlement and ratification to the jury, and to give them proper instructions relating thereto. This has become the law of the case, and the trial court had no discretion except to try the issues which this court specially directed should be heard and determined. If defendant in error was not satisfied with the former opinion, and if she thought this court went too far in remanding the cause for the special purpose of having the issues of a settlement and of a ratification of that settlement by Mrs. McNeill disposed of by the trial court, she should have taken steps to have the opinion reviewed, and such directions given and orders made as the facts and the law warranted. We do not understand that any objections were offered to the order made on the former appeal, and defendant in error cannot now, after the trial court has proceeded in obedience to the orders of this court, take exceptions to the action of the trial court in so doing. Neither can we overlook errors committed by the trial court in submitting to the jury issues which he was specially directed to try, or say that these errors were not prejudicial to the plaintiff in error because these issues were immaterial or had been settled at a former hearing.

Relating to the questions of the settlement made by Mr. McNeill with plaintiff in error, and its ratification by Mrs. McNeill, the court instructed the jury as follows: "Ninth. The jury are instructed that the plaintiff, in his supplemental petition, alleges, and seeks to prove the same by testimony introduced, that the defendant, Ruth McNeill, authorized her agent to consummate the settlement as alleged in plaintiff's petition, and further claims by her acts and language did ratify said agreement subsequent to its execution. If you find from the evidence that the defendant did so authorize her agent to consummate this alleged agreement, or that by her acts subsequently she ratified the same, then she is estopped from denying the validity of said contract, and your verdict should be for the plaintiff; but the question as to whether

she ever authorized her agent to execute such contract, or that she by her acts and language afterwards ratified the same, are questions for the jury to determine from all the evidence." There was evidence tending to show that after Morrill had commenced his action in replevin, and the sheriff had seized the property described in the writ, Mrs. McNeill sent for Callender, and desired him to effect a settlement of the case. It is conclusively shown that Callender and Allen McNeill, the husband of Ruth, met the attorneys for Morrill in the office of one Morrison on the evening of the second day after the levy; that a settlement was effected, by the terms of which Morrill was to release from the levy 100 bushels of corn, a like amount of wheat, certain horses, and all the agricultural implements taken on the writ, and that he was to allow McNeill the sum of \$801 for the property not returned; that McNeill made a bill of sale to Morrill for all the property not returned to him, executing the same for himself and for his wife as her agent. There is other evidence tending to prove that, within a short time after this settlement was consummated, Mrs. McNeill knew of the terms of the settlement, and received back and had the benefit of such property as was returned; that she knew that the McNeill note to Morrill had been surrendered, and a new note taken for a balance of something in excess of \$300 still due on the debt; and that she did not in any manner repudiate the act of her husband in acting for her, but, on the contrary, expressed herself as well satisfied to several parties who testified upon the trial. It was upon this state of facts that the instruction above quoted was given. Objection was taken to the instruction by Morrill, for the reason that the court did not define what acts were necessary on the part of Mrs. McNeill to constitute a ratification. An examination of the instruction will show that this objection is well taken. The court does not in this instruction, nor in any of the instructions given, attempt to inform the jury what act or acts on the part of Mrs. McNeill might be considered by them as a ratification on her part of her

husband's act in making the settlement, if she did not authorize him to do so in the first instance. Under this instruction the jury had to determine for themselves what, in law, would constitute a ratification, and the court submitted to the jury for their determination a question of law which it was his province alone to determine. To cure this defect in the instruction, the plaintiff below offered one or more instructions defining what acts on the part of Mrs. McNeill would constitute a ratification of her husband's act in making the settlement, and these instructions were refused by the court. As said in the former opinion, "The rule is well settled that a party is entitled to have his theory of the case, if it is supported by the pleadings and proof, submitted to the jury," and as there was competent evidence tending to show a ratification on the part of Mrs. McNeill, the court should have submitted that question to the jury by a proper instruction clearly defining what would constitute a ratification by her.

The record does not show that any objections were made in the trial court to the sufficiency of the pleadings setting up a ratification by Mrs. McNeill of the alleged settlement by her husband. The case was apparently tried upon the theory that the pleadings sufficiently presented that issue. It is now urged that the supplemental petition of Morrill does not state facts sufficient to show a ratification by Mrs. McNeill, or to estop her from claiming her property, and that a misdirection on that question should not work a reversal of the case. As before stated, the case was tried on the theory that the pleadings sufficiently presented the issue of a ratification by Mrs. McNeill of the settlement made by her husband; and after having tried the case on this theory, and without in any manner questioning the sufficiency of the pleading of the plaintiff to make that issue, she cannot now take advantage of its insufficiency, if it is defective, and gain an advantage by urging it for the first time in this court. The case must be tried here on the same

theory that obtained in the district court, and misdirection relating to issues which both parties accepted as presented by the pleadings will not be disregarded because the pleadings of one of the parties may be technically defective in making the issue. We do not wish to be understood as intimating that Morrill's supplemental petition did not fairly present the question of the ratification by Mrs. McNeill of the settlement made by her husband. That is a question which we are not called upon to examine or determine, the trial court and the parties having accepted it as doing so.

For the error pointed out, we recommend a reversal of the judgment.

JACKSON, C., concurs. ALBERT, C., not sitting.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

REVERSED.

LYMAN RICHARDSON ET AL., APPELLEES, V. CITY OF OMAHA
ET AL., APPELLANTS.

FILED JUNE 22, 1905. No. 13,766.

1. **City Council: SPECIAL MEETINGS: NOTICE.** A call for a special session of the city council of the city of Omaha in the following language, "A special meeting of the city council of the city of Omaha is hereby called for Saturday, July 1, 1899, at 8:30 o'clock A. M., in the council chamber in the city hall, for the purpose of considering communications, petitions, resolutions, committee reports and ordinances on first, second and third reading and passage"—where such call is properly recorded in the journal with the proceedings of the council when assembled, is a sufficient compliance with the provisions of the Omaha charter to enable the council to introduce, read and pass ordinances at such special meeting.
2. ———: **DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY.** A resolution adopted by the city council of the city of Omaha, directing that certain permanent

sidewalks shall be constructed "of stone or artificial stone," is a compliance with the provisions of an ordinance in force in that city, requiring the mayor and council to designate the kind of material with which permanent sidewalks shall be constructed, and does not amount to a delegation of the authority to determine of what material permanent walks shall be constructed.

APPEAL from the district court for Douglas county:
CHARLES T. DICKINSON, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

C. C. Wright, W. H. Herdman and A. G. Ellick, for appellants.

H. W. Pennock and McGilton, Gaines & Storey, contra.

JACKSON, C.

The plaintiffs instituted this action to enjoin the collection of certain special taxes and assessments levied by the city of Omaha on certain lots and lands, and the case was brought to this court by appeal from the decree declaring the assessments in street improvement district No. 679 to be void, and that the assessment for certain permanent sidewalks was also void. It appears from the record that at special meetings of the city council of the city of Omaha an ordinance was introduced and passed providing for certain improvements in street improvement district No. 679. Section 39 of the charter of Omaha provides:

"The mayor or any three councilmen shall have power to call special meetings of the council, the object of which shall be submitted to the council in writing, and the call and object and disposition thereof, shall be entered upon the journal by the clerk." The record of the meeting at which the ordinance was introduced, in so far as it is pertinent to the inquiry, is as follows: "Council Chamber, July 1, 1899. Special meeting. Council called to order. Special session Saturday July 1, 1899, at 8:30 o'clock A. M., by President Bingham. Present, Bechel, Burkley, Burmester, Karr, Mount, Stuht, Mr. President.

Absent, Lobeck, Mercer. Quorum present. Call. A special meeting of the city council of the city of Omaha is hereby called for Saturday, July 1, 1899, at 8:30 o'clock A. M., in the council chamber in the City Hall, for the purpose of considering communications, petitions, resolutions, committee reports and ordinances on first, second and third reading and passage. Frank J. Burkley, Ernest Stuht, W. W. Bingham, Wm. F. Bechel." At this meeting the ordinance was introduced, read the first time, and, under a suspension of the rules, read for the second time. On July 3 of the same year, at another special meeting of the council, of which the record material to the inquiry is substantially the same as that of the meeting of July 1, with the exception of the date and the hour of the meeting, and that only one of the councilmen was absent, the ordinance was put upon its third reading and passage, and was passed by the necessary number of votes.

It is contended by the plaintiffs that the ordinance is void because it was introduced and passed at special sessions of the city council, and that at the special sessions, so held, the object of the meeting was not submitted to the council in writing, nor was the object and call of the meeting spread upon the journal of the council by the clerk. This contention of the plaintiffs was sustained by the court, and the collection of the special assessments and taxes was enjoined. The record of the special meetings quoted above was introduced and received in evidence at the instance of the plaintiffs, from which it appears that the claim of the plaintiffs and the finding of the court that the call and object of the meeting were not spread on the journal of the city council by the clerk is not well founded. It is argued by counsel that Omaha inherited its charter provisions from the colonies, which required notice of special town meetings to contain a statement of the object and purpose of the meeting, and that consideration of the construction placed upon the requirements as to the notice of such special town meetings will sustain their contention in this case. A careful reading, however, of

the charter provision relied upon, leads to a different conclusion. No particular form for the notice of special meetings of the city council in Omaha is required by the charter, nor is it required that the object of the meeting shall be stated in the call. What seems to be required, if the charter provision is mandatory, is that, after the council is convened, the object of the meeting shall be stated; in other words, that the question shall be stated before the motion is put. We think that the Omaha charter has adopted the form rather than the substance of the requirements necessary to a special town meeting in the colonial period, and that the call of the special meetings of the Omaha council included a sufficient statement of the object of the meeting, and obviates the necessity of any other statement or procedure to give the meeting vitality, other than the act of spreading the call at large upon the journal as a part of the proceedings of the council. A very substantial reason might be given for obeying the provision of the charter, had it required notice of the meeting to contain a statement of the object of the meeting, but there seems to be no good reason for insisting that, after the council has convened, the contents of the proposed ordinance should be disclosed by a statement before the ordinance is read, when a much more satisfactory exposition of the ordinance is made by the reading of the ordinance itself. We conclude that the requirements of the provisions of the Omaha charter questioned in this proceeding have been substantially complied with.

Upon the other branch of the case, relating to the assessments for permanent sidewalks, it is contended by the plaintiffs, and was found by the court, that the resolution directing the construction of the walks is invalid because the mayor and council did not designate the kind of material with which the walks should be constructed, and that the authority to designate such material was delegated to the board of public works, contrary to the provisions of the ordinance under which the walks were or-

dered to be constructed. Section 3 of the ordinance of the city authorizing the mayor and council to order the construction of permanent walks is as follows: "That the sidewalks shall be laid and constructed of permanent material, such as brick, tiling, stone, artificial stone, macadam, slagolithic or other like material, as may be ordered by the mayor and council." The resolution directing the construction of the walks provided that they should be constructed "of stone or artificial stone" and required them to be constructed according to the plans, specifications and requirements of the board of public works, and provided that, unless the owner or owners of the premises should construct such walks within 15 days, the board of public works should cause the same to be done, and report the cost to the city council, to be assessed to the extent of special benefits thereto upon the lot, part of lot or real estate along or abutting with such sidewalk so constructed. The owners failed to comply with the resolution, and the walks were constructed by the city, and the cost of such construction assessed to the owners of the abutting property, according to the provisions of the resolution directing construction of the walks.

The district court sustained the contention of the plaintiffs and enjoined the collection of the special assessments and taxes; the language of the decree being:

"For the reason that the city of Omaha, through its mayor and council, failed to determine or designate the material of which the sidewalks should be constructed, but unlawfully delegated the power to designate and determine the material to be used in said sidewalks to the board of public works in the city."

We find ourselves unable to agree with the conclusions reached by the district court. The mayor and council directed the sidewalks to be constructed of stone, leaving it to the owner in the first instance, and to the board of public works in the second instance, to determine whether the stone so used should be natural or artificial, a provision which we think beneficial to the property owner,

especially so, had he elected, as he should have done, to have obeyed the mandate of the corporate authority and constructed the sidewalk at once, instead of compelling the public to resort to the expediency of improving his property, and being obliged to appeal to the courts to compel him to make payment therefor. A similar question was before the appellate court of Missouri in the case of *Gallaher v. Smith*, 55 Mo. App. 116. In that case it appears that the city of St. Joseph had directed the construction of certain walks of "plank, * * * sawn from sound pine, white or burr oak timber." The charter provision under which the council in that case acted is as follows: "The common council shall have the power to cause to be constructed, reconstructed, or otherwise improved and repaired, all * * * sidewalks * * * within the city, at such time, and to such extent, and of such dimensions, and with such materials, and in such manner, and under such regulations as shall be provided by ordinance." Payment of a tax imposed for the construction of a walk was sought to be avoided upon the ground that the ordinance and the contract were void, as they delegated to the city engineer a discretion which was vested by the charter in the city council. The court say:

"The ordinance and contract * * * clearly left it to the option of the contractor to use either pine or oak lumber in building the sidewalk. Was the ordinance for that reason void? In support of the judgment below, it is insisted that the ordinance fails to designate the *materials* from which the walk was to be constructed, but left the decision of that matter with the contractor, thereby delegating the legislative powers of the common council to another. * * * We cannot give our assent to the contention that there was such a delegation of legislative judgment as will avoid the ordinance. The council has not failed to designate the material. The ordinance, with much minuteness of detail, has prescribed the length, breadth and thickness of the lumber, how laid and how ballasted, and then has in effect said to the contractor,

'we are indifferent whether you use pine or oak—either will answer.' The council has exercised its judgment and declared in effect that there can be no choice between the two; and this is all that can be asked. * * * We think the council, in the matter in hand, did exercise its judgment and discretion, and did not delegate it to another."

The reasoning in that case is sound, and, in our judgment, should be adopted and followed in this case.

As the district court allowed a perpetual injunction, we recommend that the judgment of the district court, in so far as it affects the special taxes and assessments in street improvement district No. 679, and for the construction of permanent sidewalks along the north 142 feet of subplot 1 of tax lot 16, section 21, township 15, range 13, and lots 5 and 6, block 8, West End Addition to the city of Omaha be reversed, and the action dismissed.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed, and the action is dismissed in so far as it affects the special taxes and assessments in street improvement district No. 679, and for the construction of permanent sidewalks along the north 142 feet of subplot 1 of tax lot 16, section 21, township 15, range 13, and lots 5 and 6, block 8, West End Addition to the city of Omaha.

REVERSED.

SEDGWICK, J., not sitting.

SARAH A. JOHNSON ET AL. V. ELIZABETH EMERICK ET AL.

FILED JUNE 22, 1905. No. 13,849.

1. **Review:** BILL OF EXCEPTIONS. A petition in error will not be dismissed on motion of the defendant in error because of a failure to settle and file a bill of exceptions, where the only question to be determined is one of law, and it is properly presented by a transcript of the record of the proceedings of the lower court.

2. **Partition: ATTORNEYS' FEES.** A partition proceeding, is one for the benefit of all the parties in interest, and where such proceedings are amicable it is proper for the trial court to allow the attorneys conducting the proceedings a reasonable attorney's fee, and to require the payment of the same by the parties in proportion to their interest in the property involved.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: **ALEXANDER C. TROUP, JUDGE.** *Reversed in part.*

Crane & Boucher, for plaintiffs in error.

C. A. Baldwin, contra.

JACKSON, C.

This case is submitted both upon a motion to dismiss the error proceedings and upon the merits of the question raised by the petition in error. The motion to dismiss the petition in error is based upon the ground that the plaintiffs neglected to prepare and file a bill of exceptions. The original certificate of the clerk of the district court recites that the bill of exceptions attached to and made a part of the transcript is the original bill of exceptions. Subsequently, however, a new certificate of the clerk was attached to the record, from which it appears that that portion of his original certificate referring to the bill of exceptions is erroneous; that no bill of exceptions had ever been filed. The only question involved in the case is the refusal of the district court to tax as a part of the costs and expenses an attorney's fee. That question is presented by the transcript, and no bill of exceptions is necessary to enable this court to determine the question. The motion of the defendants to dismiss the error proceedings is therefore overruled.

The plaintiffs, five in number, instituted the proceedings in the court below, for the partition of real estate. Three of the plaintiffs were minors, and the caption of the original petition discloses that they appeared by their mother and next friend. The plaintiffs represent a one-

fifth interest in the real estate sought to be partitioned. Personal service was had upon the defendants, who were defaulted at the hearing, and a decree of partition entered as prayed on the 23d day of July, 1903. On November 23, 1903, the defendants, by their attorney, filed in the office of the clerk of the district court an instrument indorsed on the back, "Objections to Jurisdiction," the text of which is as follows:

"The above named defendants Elizabeth Emerick, John Emerick and Hattie Amelia Hale, in reference to the matters here involved, say the facts stated in the petition as to the interests of said defendants in the lands to be partitioned are true as therein stated; and that said John Emerick, Elizabeth Emerick and Hattie Amelia Hale are the owners of, and are entitled to have and hold, four-fifths part of said lands. That by reason of the fact that three of the heirs of Eli Johnson, Jr., deceased, who as such heirs are each entitled to have a one-twentieth part of said lands set off to them, are minors, it is entirely impractical to make an actual partition of the land, such a partition would have rendered their separate interests in the land almost valueless, and for that reason, and to protect said minors, and for no other reason, these proceedings are properly instituted, and by a sale of all of said lands have the value of the one-fifth interest in the land which is to be divided between the said heirs of said Eli Johnson, Jr., determined; an amicable partition between John and Elizabeth Emerick and Mrs. Hale, who is the sister of Mrs. Emerick, if a partition is ever desired, can be made at any time, and without costs. The aforesaid defendants say that, to protect their rights and interest here involved, and to see that the steps taken to obtain the partition were in all things regular and legal, they employed C. A. Baldwin, attorney, as their counselor and advisor, and he has acted as such from the commencement of this action. Defendants say that they have been advised by their attorney that it is extremely doubtful as to whether a suit for partition of land can be brought by

Johnson v. Emerick.

minors in the name of "their next friend," as is done in this case, and they here and now submit that question to the court and ask judgment thereon. If the court finds that suit cannot be thus brought, it would invalidate the entire proceedings had. Said defendants say that they are informed and believe, and therefore aver the fact to be, that no proceedings have been taken to settle the estate of said Eli Johnson, Jr., deceased, and there is here nothing appearing that there are no claims against said estate that must be fully paid before said heirs of said Eli Johnson, Jr., deceased, are entitled to receive the one-fifth part of the proceeds arising from a sale of the lands or any part thereof. Wherefore said defendants ask the court, before an order of sale of the property is made, that the court determine the question as to the right of the said minors to bring this suit in the name of their next friend, and if the court finds that the suit was so properly brought, then and in that case the court make such order as is provided in section 828, code of civil procedure, Nebraska."

The district court, it appears from the record, considered his so-called "objections to its jurisdiction," and determined that the action was properly brought in the name of the minors by their mother and next friend. The record recites, however, that, out of deference to counsel who filed the objections, the title to the petition, and in the decree, was changed to read, "Guardian and next friend." No other or further appearance was made by the defendants until after the confirmation of the sale, when the plaintiffs asked for the allowance of a reasonable attorney's fee, the defendants again appeared and resisted the allowance of an attorney's fee. The court allowed the attorneys for the plaintiffs the sum of \$150 for services rendered the referees, and found: "That the law of this state does not authorize the taxing as costs in any action of partition the fees for services of attorneys for the plaintiffs, without the consent and against the objection and protest of defendants, they having employed separate

counsel, and for that reason alone it is ordered by the court that the objections to such allowance be sustained, and that the said motion be, and the same hereby is, overruled; to which conclusion and order the plaintiffs except, and their exception is allowed."

It is contended by counsel for defendants that the judgment of the district court is right, because the proceedings were adverse as between the plaintiffs and defendants. That question, however, must be determined from the record with reference to the claims of the different parties to the suit and the course pursued by them. In law, an adversary proceeding is one in distinction from an application to which no opposition is made. Was the paper filed in this case four months after the entry of the decree such a one as raised an issue as between the plaintiffs and defendants? On the contrary, it seems to have been in the nature of a friendly suggestion to the court on the part of the defendants and in behalf of the plaintiffs. The allegations of the petition were admitted to be true. The interest of the defendants in the property sought to be partitioned was conceded to have been properly set out in the petition, and provided for in the decree. No relief was sought on behalf of the defendants. No adverse action was ever taken in the case until the plaintiffs requested the payment of counsel's fees out of the proceeds of the sale of the premises. When that application was made, the proceedings at once became adversary on the question of the payment of attorneys' fees alone; but a contest over the payment of attorneys' fees would not of itself be sufficient to make the partition proceedings adversary, and, in our judgment, the case must turn upon the right of the trial court to allow attorneys' fees in partition proceedings in any event. That question never seems to have been before this court except in the case of *Oliver v. Lansing*, 57 Neb. 352. That case, however, does not determine the right of the court to allow an attorney's fee in partition proceedings where such proceedings are amicable, because that question was not before the court.

In that case the proceedings were confessedly adversary. The inference, however, to be drawn from the language of Mr. Justice SULLIVAN, who delivered the opinion of the court, is that, had the proceedings been amicable, it would be proper to allow an attorney's fee. The statute provides that all costs of proceedings in partition shall be paid in the first instance by the plaintiffs, but eventually by all the parties in proportion to their interests, except those costs which are created by contests above provided for. It has been the practice of the trial courts generally in this state to allow a reasonable attorney's fee to be paid out of the proceeds of the sale according to the interests of the parties, in addition to the other costs incurred. This practice is supported by precedent. Originally, the English law courts required parties in partition proceedings to pay their own expenses up to the entry of the order of partition, and thereafter the expense incurred was paid out of the estate. Later, when the chancery courts assumed jurisdiction of partition proceedings, owing to complications in titles, with which the law courts could not deal, the practice of requiring all costs and expenses to be paid out of the estate, especially in cases where the interests of minors were involved, prevailed. It is probably due to that practice that in the United States several states have provided by statute for the payment of attorneys' fees in partition proceedings by all the parties in proportion to their interests. Many of the states, however, have not, by express terms, provided for the payment of attorneys' fees in partition proceedings, and the courts of last resort in some of these states at least, notably Rhode Island, Ohio, Michigan and Minnesota, have held that the trial court should allow fees to counsel conducting the proceedings where they are not adversary. *Redecker v. Bowen*, 15 R. I. 52; *Lowe v. Phillips*, 21 Ohio St. 657; *Grcusel v. Smith*, 85 Mich. 574; *Hanson v. Ingwaldson*, 84 Minn. 346, 87 N. W. 915.

It has already been noticed that three of the plaintiffs are minors, who represent only three-twentieths of the

estate partitioned, and under the circumstances in this case it would be inequitable not to require all of the parties to contribute toward the payment of the fees of counsel whose services were equally beneficial to them all. The trial court allowed counsel for the plaintiffs a fee of \$150 for service performed in behalf of the referees. That service, however, is one which should ordinarily be performed by counsel who are employed generally in the case, and, if the conclusion reached by the trial court with respect to the allowance of attorneys' fees was correct, the allowance of the item of \$150 was entirely improper.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed in so far as it denies the allowance of an attorney's fee, and that the case be remanded for further proceedings in conformity with this opinion.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed in so far as it denies the allowance of an attorney's fee, and the case is remanded for further proceedings in conformity with this opinion.

REVERSED IN PART.

SEDGWICK, J., not sitting.

WILLIAM STULL V. AGGIE MASILONKA ET AL.*

FILED JUNE 22, 1905. No. 13,858.

1. **Decree: SUIT TO ANNUL: PARTIES.** In an action to set aside a decree of the district court affecting the title to real estate, a plaintiff cannot be permitted to recover, unless it appears from the pleadings and proof that he has some interest in the title to the property involved.
2. **Foreclosure: DECREE: VALIDITY.** The record and evidence examined,

* Rehearing denied. See opinion, p. 322, *post*.

and held, that the district court had acquired jurisdiction in the foreclosure proceedings pleaded and proved at the trial, and that the decree and sale thereunder were not void.

3. ———: ASSAILING TITLE: EQUITY. Where a valid real estate mortgage has been foreclosed, even though the foreclosure proceedings were void, neither the mortgagor nor a person claiming under him will be permitted to assail the title acquired through the foreclosure proceedings without offering to pay the amount of the decree and interest.

ERROR to the district court for Platte county: CONRAD HOLLENBECK, JUDGE. *Reversed with directions.*

John J. Sullivan, for plaintiff in error.

A. M. Post, L. R. Latham and McAllister & Cornelius, for defendants in error.

Flansburg & Williams, amici curiæ.

JACKSON, C.

This is a proceeding in error to reverse a judgment of the district court for Platte county. To insure a proper understanding of the issues involved, it seems necessary to make a detailed statement of the facts and conditions as they appear from the record. On December 5, 1894, Paul Masilonka borrowed of Stull Bros. \$800. He gave his note secured by a real estate mortgage covering the west half of the northeast quarter of 18-19-2. A portion of the interest accruing on this loan was evidenced by separate notes secured by a second mortgage. Paul Masilonka died intestate. Default was made in the payment of interest accruing on the loan, and on March 5, 1896, William Stull and Louis Stull, partners as Stull Bros., commenced an action in the district court for Platte county, where the land is situate, for a foreclosure of the second mortgage. Among the defendants named in the petition were the unknown heirs of Paul Masilonka, deceased. In the body of the petition the land was described as the west

half of the northwest of 18-19-2. The petition, however, recited the execution and delivery of the mortgage, and referred to a copy of the mortgage which was attached to the petition as an exhibit. In the copy of the mortgage so attached the land was correctly described. On April 13th following there was filed in the case the affidavit of William Stull, wherein he testified that he was a member of the firm of Stull Bros., plaintiffs in the above case; that said Paul Masilonka, deceased, was the maker of the note and mortgage sought to be foreclosed in this case; that said Paul Masilonka has departed this life, and has left surviving him certain heirs, who appear to have an interest in the premises described in the petition filed herein, and who are made defendants in this cause; and that the names and residences and whereabouts of said heirs are to the plaintiffs unknown; that service of summons cannot be had upon them except by publication. On the following day the district court for Platte county made an order providing for service by publication upon the defendants, the unknown heirs of Paul Masilonka. A notice was published pursuant to the order of the court, and, among other things, contained a correct description of the land. On November 16 of the same year the plaintiffs in the foreclosure proceedings filed an amended petition, similar to the original petition, except that the real estate was correctly described both in the body of the petition and in the copy of the mortgage attached, and that, in addition to naming the unknown heirs of Paul Masilonka, there was added, "unknown devisees of Paul Masilonka, deceased." With the amended petition was filed another affidavit of William Stull, wherein he recited the death of Paul Masilonka, and that Masilonka left certain heirs and devisees, whose names and whereabouts were unknown to plaintiffs; that plaintiffs have made inquiry and have endeavored to ascertain the names and residences of said unknown heirs and devisees, but have been unable to ascertain the same. This was followed by the publication of a new notice, regular in all

respects, except that the land was described therein as the west half of the northwest quarter of 18-19-2. The defendants defaulted, and on June 14, 1897, a decree of foreclosure was entered, and the property was sold to satisfy the decree, subject to the \$800 mortgage; William Stull and Louis Stull being the purchasers at such sale. The sale was confirmed, and a deed was executed, delivered and recorded.

Thereafter, on the 14th day of July, 1898, William Stull and Louis Stull, partners as Stull Bros., filed a petition in the district court for Platte county against Agnes Masilonka, widow of Paul Masilonka, deceased, Anton Masilonka and his wife, Mary Winski and her husband, Anna Stempa and her husband, Aggie Masilonka, Kate Masilonka, John Masilonka, Valeria Masilonka, Sophia Masilonka and Paul Masilonka, minor heirs of Paul Masilonka, deceased. In this petition the execution and delivery of the mortgages above referred to were set out, together with the proceedings of foreclosure. It recited the death of Paul Masilonka, and that Agnes Masilonka, Anton Masilonka and his wife, Mary Winski and her husband, Anna Stempa and her husband, Aggie Masilonka, Kate Masilonka, John Masilonka, Valeria Masilonka, Sophia Masilonka and Paul Masilonka were the sole heirs of Paul Masilonka, deceased. It further recited that the plaintiffs had entered into the possession of the premises, and an error in the description of the property in the publication of the notice in the foreclosure proceedings; that, by reason of the error in the process, the defendants appeared to have an equity of redemption in the premises. The petition further recited that the mortgage indebtedness was still unpaid; prayed for the appointment of a guardian *ad litem* for the minor defendants; that a decree might be entered directing the defendants, within a short day, to be fixed by the court, to pay the plaintiffs the amount thereof, with interest, and that, upon failure to pay said amount within the time fixed, defendants be barred and foreclosed of all title, interest and equity of

redemption in the premises; further prayed that the title to the premises be forever quieted in the plaintiffs and their grantees. Proper service was had upon all of the defendants in this proceeding. A guardian *ad litem* was appointed for the minor defendants, who filed a general denial in their behalf. A default was entered as to the other defendants for want of appearance, and on November 15, 1898, the cause was tried to the court, and a decree entered in conformity with the prayer of the petition. The court found, among other things, that the plaintiffs had entered into the possession of the premises, and that they were then in possession; that they were entitled to a strict foreclosure of the equity of redemption, and a quieting of the title in and to said described premises; that the defendants had not redeemed from the sale, and had not paid the amount due the plaintiffs on their mortgage; and it was adjudged that if the defendants should fail for the space of 30 days from the entry of the decree to pay the plaintiffs herein the sum of \$251, the amount of the original decree, with interest, the right, title, interest and equity of redemption of the defendants be forever foreclosed and barred, and, upon failure of the defendants to pay said sum as aforesaid, title to said premises is by this decree forever quieted in the plaintiffs herein and their grantees. No redemption was ever attempted or had. The property was conveyed by Stull Bros., and the title finally vested in Adam Peir, who purchased for a full consideration and without actual notice of the defect now alleged in the title.

Thereafter, on the 10th day of September, 1903, Aggie Masilonka, Kate Masilonka, Vera Kodzeij, John Masilonka, Sophia Masilonka and Paul Masilonka filed their petition in the district court for Platte county against Louis Stull and William Stull, partners doing business in the firm name of Stull Bros., Anton Masilonka, Mary Winski, Anna Stempa, Adam Peir and — Peir, his wife, whose Christian name is unknown, and Israel Gluck; the petition being as follows:

"The plaintiffs herein complain of the defendants, and for cause of action allege:

"1. Plaintiffs and the defendants Anton Masilonka, Mary Winski and Anna Stempa were on the 14th day of July, 1898, the owners, by title in fee simple, as the joint tenants, of the west half of the northeast (N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$) quarter of section eighteen (18), in township nineteen (19) north of range two (2) west of the 6th principal meridian, in Platte county, Nebraska, subject to the estate for life therein of their mother, Agnes Masilonka. And upon the death of the said Agnes Masilonka, to wit, on the 8th day of February, 1899, plaintiffs and the defendants above named became, have been continuously since said date, and now are, seized of the full legal and equitable title of said premises.

"2. On the said 14th day of July, 1898, the said Louis Stull and William Stull filed in this court their petition against the plaintiffs herein, and the defendants Anton Masilonka, Mary Winski and Anna Stempa, impleaded with the said Agnes Masilonka, the object and prayer of which were to obtain a decree of strict foreclosure of a certain mortgage then existing upon the above described premises. Said suit was prosecuted to final decree on the 15th day of November, 1898, whereby the aforesaid defendants therein, owners of the above described property, were ordered to redeem said property by paying to the said Louis Stull and William Stull, within the period of 30 days from and after said date, the full amount of such mortgage debt, with interest thereon and expenses incurred on account thereof, to wit, the sum of \$251. And it was by decree further ordered and adjudged that, upon the failure of such owners to so pay the said sum of \$251, together with interest and cost of said suit, within the aforesaid period, the right, title, interest, and equity of redemption of such owners, and each thereof, in and to said property be forever barred and foreclosed, and the title thereto of the said Louis Stull and William Stull forever quieted and confirmed.

"3. The plaintiff, John Masilonka, and the defendant, Anton Masilonka, were personally served with summons notifying them of the pendency of said suit. Service in said cause was had upon the plaintiffs herein, Aggie Masilonka, Kate Masilonka, Sophia Masilonka and Paul Masilonka, and also upon the defendants herein, Mary Winski and Anna Stempa, by publication of notice in a newspaper of said Platte county, and not otherwise; no service whatever being had in said suit upon the plaintiff herein, Vera Kodzeji. No appearance was made in said suit by the defendants therein, plaintiffs and defendants in this cause, or either thereof, nor was any authorized appearance made therein in their behalf, or in behalf of either of them.

"4. Plaintiffs herein, and each thereof, were at the date of the decree aforesaid infants under the age of 17 years, and are each now within the age of 21 years. The said Henry C. Carrig is the duly appointed guardian of the said John Masilonka, Kate Masilonka and Paul Masilonka, and as such guardian and next friend of said infants prosecutes this suit in their behalf. The said Anton Masilonka, Mary Winski and Anna Stempa, having refused to join herein as plaintiffs, are accordingly made parties defendant hereto.

"5. The plaintiffs and defendants herein, owners of said property, have been at all times since the date of said decree, and now are, unable to comply with the terms and conditions thereof, and said decree remains unreversed and unsatisfied. The said Louis Stull and William Stull, upon the failure as aforesaid of the owners thereof to redeem said property within the period of 30 days from and after the entry of said decree, took possession of said property, claiming to own and hold the same by title absolute, and the said Stulls and their grantees have continuously since said date enjoyed the possession, rents and profits thereof. The defendants Israel Gluck, Adam Peir and — Peir, his wife, whose first or Christian name is unknown to plaintiffs, claim an interest in said property

through certain mesne conveyances, as the successors of the said Louis Stull and William Stull.

"6. There is manifest error to the prejudice of these plaintiffs in the decree aforesaid and in the proceedings of said cause antecedent thereto, viz.: (1) The court failed to determine who among the defendants in said cause were infants, and failed to name or sufficiently describe the defendants for whom it assumed to appoint a guardian *ad litem*. (2) The appointment in said cause of a guardian *ad litem* for certain of the defendants therein, and the subsequent appearance in said cause of said guardian, are irregular and erroneous, for the reason that it does not appear for whom said guardian was appointed, or in whose name or interests he assumed to act. (3) The plaintiffs herein, and each thereof, although known by said Louis Stull at the date of said decree to be infants, were not represented in said cause, and their interests in the subject thereof were not protected. (4) The only object or purpose of said suit being to obtain a decree of strict foreclosure of a mortgage upon the real property hereinbefore described, at the date thereof owned and held by the defendants in said cause by title in fee simple, failed to state a cause of action against said defendants, or either thereof, and the court accordingly erred in adjudging that the plaintiffs, Louis Stull and William Stull, were entitled to any relief therein. (5) The plaintiffs in said cause, Louis Stull and William Stull, were not upon the facts alleged in their petition therein entitled to a decree of strict foreclosure against the defendants in said cause, owners and holders of the legal title of the real property in said petition described. (6) There is no authority of law for a decree of strict foreclosure against the holder of the legal title of the mortgaged property. (7) The guardian who appeared in said cause, by appointment of the court, negligently failed to guard or protect the interests of the infant defendants therein, in omitting to challenge the sufficiency of the petition of the plaintiffs therein. (8) And the plaintiffs

say that they and their codefendants in said suit, the said Anton Masilonka, Mary Winski and Anna Stempa, had at the date of the decree aforesaid, and now have, by reason of the facts hereinbefore alleged and shown, a full, complete, and perfect defense to the aforesaid suit, and that said decree is as to these plaintiffs inequitable and erroneous. Wherefore plaintiffs pray, upon such terms and conditions as may be found reasonable and just:

(1) That the decree hereinbefore mentioned may be vacated and wholly set aside, and that plaintiffs may be permitted to appear in said cause and make defense thereto.

(2) That plaintiffs' title and interest in and to said real property be forever quieted and confirmed as against the defendants, William Stull and Louis Stull, and all persons claiming through and under them including the defendants Adam Peir and Israel Gluck. (3) That said premises be partitioned in the manner prescribed by law among the several owners thereof as their interests may be made to appear. (4) That an account may be taken of the rents and profits of said premises for the period that the same have been occupied by the several defendants respectively, and that the plaintiffs may have judgment for the amount found in their favor. (5) For such other and further relief as may appear to be just and equitable in the premises."

To this petition William Stull answered, denying such allegations of the petition as were not admitted; setting up the foreclosure proceedings already described; the sale of the real estate thereunder, and the confirmation thereof, together with the subsequent action brought by them, and the decree of the court thereunder; the transfer of the real estate by the purchasers at the judicial sale; the payment of the \$800 mortgage by one of the purchasers by renewal mortgage; and asked that the plaintiffs' petition be dismissed. Adam Peir, the present owner of the real estate, answered, challenging the authority of Henry C. Carrig as guardian for the minor plaintiffs, and also setting out the foreclosure proceedings, with a copy of the

decree therein; the sale of the real estate and the confirmation thereof; the subsequent proceedings by Stull Bros.; the sale by them of the real estate, and the final purchase by himself; and he also prayed the dismissal of the action. The defendants, Anton Masillonka, Mary Winski and Anna Stempa, answered by adopting the allegations of the petition and the prayer thereof. The plaintiffs, replying to the answer of William Stull, admitted the execution of the mortgage involved in the foreclosure proceedings; admitted the institution of the action to foreclose the mortgage, and the proceedings thereunder as herein stated, but denied the jurisdiction of the court in that action, and claimed that the proceedings were void. They admitted the conveyance of the property by Stull Bros., and the final conveyance to defendant, Peir. They also replied to the answer of Adam Peir substantially as they had replied to the answer of the defendant Stull. The defendant, Louis Stull, did not answer, and was defaulted. There was a hearing to the court, and a finding for the plaintiffs, setting aside the decree entered November 15, 1898, in the second action brought by Stull Bros.; directing that said action be placed upon the trial docket for hearing in its order; and requiring the defendants therein to answer within 30 days from that date. Separate motions for a new trial were filed by defendants, William Stull and Adam Peir, which were overruled, and they have brought the case to this court by petition in error.

The scope of inquiry may be embraced in two questions: First. Did the defendants in error, plaintiffs below, have an interest in the subject matter such as to entitle them to any relief whatever? Second. If they did have such interest, is their petition sufficient, under the facts disclosed by the record, to entitle them to the relief granted by the court below?

It will be observed that their prayer for relief consisted, first, of a request that the so-called decree of strict foreclosure be set aside, and that they be permitted to appear in that case and defend; second, that their title to the real

estate be quieted and confirmed as against the Stulls and all persons claiming through them, including the defendant, Adam Peir; third, that the premises be partitioned; and fourth, that an account should be taken of the rents and profits of the premises while in the possession of the defendants, and that they have judgment therefor. The original foreclosure proceedings are nowhere referred to in the petition; such proceedings are not assailed, and no relief is asked as against such proceedings, it is evident, however, that the rights of the parties depend, to some extent at least, upon the validity of the foreclosure proceedings, and to that proceeding we will first devote our attention.

It is contended that the first notice to the unknown heirs of Paul Masilonka, deceased, was unauthorized and void for two reasons: First, because the affidavit of one of the plaintiffs that the names and whereabouts of the unknown heirs of Paul Masilonka were to the plaintiffs unknown is insufficient; that the affidavit of both plaintiffs is required. This contention cannot be sustained. The affidavit of William Stull recites that "the names and residences and whereabouts of said heirs are to the plaintiffs unknown." The trial court acted upon that affidavit and found it to be sufficient, and ordered service by publication on account thereof. The affidavit was positively sworn to, and contained the information upon which the court was authorized to act. The provisions of the code are to be liberally construed, with the view to promote its object and assist the parties in obtaining justice. Code, sec. 1. And second, because it is said that the affidavit was not attached to the petition as the statute required. The record does not disclose whether the affidavit was attached to the petition or not, and it is sufficient to say that, in the absence of direct proof to the contrary, the proceedings of the district court will be presumed to have been regular. We hold therefore that the district court acquired jurisdiction of the parties through the first notice in the foreclosure proceedings. The notice was com-

plete and ample to advise the parties in interest of the cause of action upon which the plaintiffs sought relief. It recited the date of the filing of the petition; the names of the plaintiffs; the court wherein the action was pending; that the plaintiffs were seeking the foreclosure of a mortgage; named the mortgagors and mortgagee; described the land upon which the mortgage was given; the notes secured by the mortgage; the amount due thereon; that the plaintiffs sought a decree of foreclosure, and that the premises might be sold; and correctly fixed the answer day.

The district court therefore having acquired jurisdiction of the parties, the inquiry next turns to the validity of the decree under the pleadings. It is said that the original petition was insufficient to support the decree because of the misdescription of the land in the body of the petition. The petition, however, referred to the mortgage, a copy of which was attached to the petition as an exhibit, and in the copy so attached the real estate was correctly described; and it is very doubtful whether this court would be justified in disturbing the decree had it been based upon this petition alone. No variance between the allegations in the petition and the proof is to be deemed material, unless it has actually misled the adverse party to his prejudice; and, whenever it is alleged that a party has been so misled, the fact must be proved to the satisfaction of the court, and it must also be shown in what respect he has been misled; and, whenever the variance is not material, as provided in the last section, the court may direct the fact to be found according to the evidence, and may order an immediate amendment, without costs. Code, secs. 138, 139. Furthermore, the property having been correctly described in one part of the petition, we think it would be a violation of the spirit of the code to hold that the decree is not supported by the original petition. However, the plaintiffs in the foreclosure proceedings filed an amended petition, setting out the same cause of action, and asking for the same relief. In the

amended petition the real estate was correctly described, both in the body of the petition and in the exhibit thereto attached. By section 144 of the code, it is provided that "the court may, either before or after judgment, in furtherance of justice, and on such terms as may be proper, amend any pleading, process, or proceeding, by adding or striking out the name of any party, or by correcting a mistake in the name of a party, or a mistake in any other respect." This section of the code authorized the correction of the error in the description of the real estate in the original petition by amendment, and such amendment was in no sense prejudicial to the defendants in that action; and a judgment founded upon the corrected petition, without notice other than the original notice, would, at the most, be a mere irregularity, and would not render the judgment void or open to collateral attack. We hold that by the foreclosure proceedings the heirs of Paul Masillonka were divested of their title to the real estate involved in this controversy, and for that reason the judgment of the district court here reviewed should be reversed.

There is another reason why the judgment cannot be sustained. The mortgage involved in the foreclosure proceeding was confessedly a valid mortgage; it has never been paid. The defendant, Adam Peir, has succeeded to all the rights of the mortgagee, and even though the foreclosure proceedings were held void, the mortgagor (in this case his heirs) will not be permitted, in equity, to avoid the effects of such foreclosure, without offering to pay what is equitably due under the decree, with interest. *Loney v. Courtney*, 24 Neb. 580; *Merriam v. Goodlett*, 36 Neb. 384; *Hall v. Hooper*, 47 Neb. 111.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and that the cause be remanded, with directions to enter judgment in conformity with this opinion.

DUFFIE, C., concurs. ALBERT, C., not sitting.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing

opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded, with directions to enter judgment in conformity with this opinion.

REVERSED WITH DIRECTIONS.

SEDGWICK, J., not sitting.

The following opinion on motion for rehearing was filed June 20, 1906. *Motion overruled*:

Constructive Service: STRICT CONSTRUCTION. Where a defendant is sought to be brought into court by some method prescribed by a statute, other than personal service, which notice may or may not reach him, and which is more or less unsatisfactory, the statutory provisions relating to such service are construed with strictness, and it is incumbent that all steps in the process required to be taken shall be followed with substantial accuracy. Former opinion modified accordingly.

LETTON, J.

The facts in this case are set forth at length in the former opinion, *ante*, p. 309. The defendants in error upon reargument urgently insist that this action is brought only for the purpose of reviewing the action to quiet title and for strict foreclosure, and that since in the petition in that case the Stulls alleged that the present plaintiffs "appeared to have an equity of redemption in the land," this was such an admission of the title of the present plaintiffs, and was so inconsistent with the assertion of any title in the Stulls under the first foreclosure proceedings, that they ought not to be allowed to object that the present plaintiffs have not a sufficient interest in the second proceeding for a strict foreclosure to enable them to maintain the present proceeding for a new trial therein.

It is further contended that the first foreclosure was void for want of proper affidavit for service by publication upon unknown heirs. In that portion of the former opinion treating of the validity of the affidavit for publication,

it is said: "The provisions of the code are to be liberally construed, with the view to promote its object and assist the parties in obtaining justice." While this is true as a general proposition, we think it is the rule, not only in this state, but in most jurisdictions, that, where a defendant is sought to be brought into court by some method prescribed by a statute, other than personal service, which notice may or may not reach him, and which is more or less unsatisfactory, the statutory provisions relating to such service are construed with strictness, and it is incumbent that all steps in the process required to be taken shall be followed with substantial accuracy, before the court will be held to have acquired jurisdiction of such a defendant. *Albers v. Kozeluh*, 68 Neb. 522; *Buchanan v. Edmisten*, 1 Neb. (Unof.) 429; *Omaha Savings Bank v. Rosewater*, 1 Neb. (Unof.) 723; *Boden v. Mier*, 71 Neb. 191. The former opinion therefore is so far modified.

We think, however, that this modification does not militate against the correctness of the position taken as to the validity of the service by publication. The affidavit for service upon unknown heirs states positively that the plaintiffs had no knowledge of the names and whereabouts of such heirs. The court might in its discretion have called for further proof of the facts alleged, but its judgment and order made with such proof before it are not void and open to collateral attack. Counsel has cited several cases from Wisconsin and Kentucky as upholding his contention that the affidavit was insufficient. In the Kentucky case it is held that an affidavit by only one of several plaintiffs is insufficient, but the allegations of the affidavit are not set forth in the opinion. In *Kane v. Rock River Canal Co.*, 15 Wis. *179, the affidavit of one of the plaintiffs merely stated that there were parties interested in the premises who were unknown. It did not even show that they were unknown to him, and the court said:

"The question then is, whether, where there are several complainants in a partition suit, an affidavit by one of them that there are parties interested who are unknown,

which by its most favorable construction can be only held to mean that they are only unknown to him, is sufficient to authorize an order of publication which will give jurisdiction over unknown owners, there being nothing to show that there were not other owners known to the other plaintiffs? We think it is not." This case is followed in *Mecklem v. Blake*, 19 Wis. 419, but the form of the affidavit is not set out in the opinion. These cases therefore are distinguishable from the one at bar.

Section 83 of the code providing for service upon unknown heirs provides that, if "it shall appear by the affidavit of the plaintiff annexed to his petition, that the names of such heirs or devisees, or any of them, and their residence are unknown to the plaintiff," etc. This affidavit therefore is evidently intended to be attached to the petition and presented to the court with the petition, so it may determine before making the order whether a cause of action exists against the unknown heirs, and whether the proof is sufficient to require an order to be made respecting service upon such persons. We see no good reason why one plaintiff should not make the affidavit, provided that he sufficiently shows lack of knowledge on the part of each of the other plaintiffs as to the names and residences of the unknown heirs, which under some circumstances one of the plaintiffs could no doubt do.

2. If the decree rendered in the first foreclosure proceeding was valid, and the sale thereunder barred and foreclosed all the interest of the plaintiffs herein in the land, the fact that the Stulls, after they had parted with the title which they acquired under the sale in the foreclosure proceedings, began an action to quiet their title by reason of what they erroneously thought was a defect in the original suit, and prayed for a strict foreclosure and a decree quieting their title, would in no wise harm or prejudice the plaintiffs herein. The decree in that case, though erroneous, would give them no new rights or revest them with the title which had been divested by the foreclosure proceedings in the first case. If they had personally ap-

peared and defended the second action they could not have prevailed, and neither can they if the decree be opened. Courts of review will not correct technical errors by which no one has been prejudiced, and a trial court will not grant a new trial for such reasons. While, under the old chancery practice, a decree of strict foreclosure would not bar an infant from showing cause against the same, and while this right is preserved in section 442 of the code, it is pointed out in *Manfull v. Graham*, 55 Neb. 645, that, where the title to land has passed by a sale under foreclosure proceedings, this right is not available to an infant.

To uphold the plaintiffs' contention we must ignore the first foreclosure proceedings. Though these proceedings were irregular in several respects, they were not void and are not subject to collateral attack. Further than this, the plaintiffs have pleaded no good grounds for opening up for review the first foreclosure proceedings, pleaded in the answer. This is essential whether the proceeding seeking to open up the decree is under the code provisions or by original action in equity. As long as the first decree must stand, to open the second for review would serve no good purpose.

The former opinion is adhered to, and the motion for rehearing

OVERRULED.

WILLIAM APKING V. GERHARD HOEFER ET AL.

FILED JUNE 22, 1905. No. 13,880.

1. **Written Contract: PAROL EVIDENCE.** Where a contract of sale has been consummated by writing, the presumption is that the writing contains the whole contract, and, in the absence of fraud, mistake or ambiguity of expression in the contract itself, parol evidence is inadmissible to change or vary its terms. *Nebraska Land & Feeding Co. v. Trauerman*, 70 Neb. 795.

Apking v. Hoefler.

2. **Contract: DEFAULT: ACTION.** Law will not aid a party to recover damages for the breach of a contract, where the failure to comply with the contract was his own.

ERROR to the district court for Adams county: **ED L. ADAMS, JUDGE.** *Reversed.*

Tibbets Bros. & Morey, for plaintiff in error.

J. M. Ragan and Ernest Hoepfner, contra.

JACKSON, C.

On the 30th day of June, 1902, plaintiff in error, hereinafter called the defendant, as party of the first part, entered into a written contract with the defendants in error, hereinafter called the plaintiffs, as parties of the second part, for the sale of a tract of land in Adams county for the sum of \$6,300, of which \$100 was paid at the time of the execution of the contract, and by the terms of the agreement the remainder was to be paid, \$900 on or before July 10, 1902, and \$5,300 on March 1, 1903. The contract also provided that the plaintiffs were to have a share of the crops then growing on the land. The contract contained the following condition: "And in case of the failure of the parties of the second part to make either of the payments, or to perform any of the covenants on their part hereby made and entered into, this contract shall, at the option of the party of the first part, be forfeited and determined, and parties of the second part shall forfeit all payments made by them on this contract, and such payments shall be retained by said party of the first part in full satisfaction and liquidation of all damages by him sustained, and he shall have the right to reenter and take possession of the premises aforesaid." The plaintiffs failed to meet the payment due on the 10th day of July, 1902, but on the 14th of that month tendered the defendant the amount of the payment due on the 10th, which the defendant refused to accept, and declared that the contract had

been forfeited. On the 1st of March, 1903, plaintiffs tendered the defendant \$6,200, with interest on \$900 from July 10, 1902, to March 1, 1903, and demanded a deed of the premises. The defendant refused to accept the tender, and refused to execute a deed, and on the 23d day of May, 1904, the plaintiffs instituted an action in the district court for Adams county against the defendant, claiming damages in the sum of \$1,400 by reason of the failure of the defendant to perform the contract. The petition sets out the execution and delivery of the contract, and the payment of the \$100, and recites that, "after said contract was signed by the plaintiffs and defendant, it was verbally agreed between plaintiffs and defendant that the payment of \$900 due on or before July 10, 1902, need not be made on that exact date, but might be made by these plaintiffs, at their option, within a few days thereafter." The petition further recited the tender of the \$900 and \$6,200. The defendant answered, first, that the facts stated in the petition were not sufficient to constitute a cause of action against the defendant; second, admitted the execution of the written contract and the payment of the \$100, and denied each and every other allegation in the petition; and third, that the plaintiffs had filed the contract for record, and that it constituted a cloud upon his title to the land, and asked to have the title quieted and confirmed as against the contract; also set up the failure of the plaintiffs to make the payments as agreed upon. Plaintiffs replied, the reply consisting of a general denial. The cause was tried to the court, without the intervention of a jury, and at the trial the defendant objected to the introduction of any evidence on the part of the plaintiffs, for the reason that the petition did not state facts sufficient to constitute a cause of action against the defendant; and the objection was overruled; and at the trial the plaintiffs were permitted to prove by oral evidence that, at the time of the execution of the contract and after it had been signed, the defendant agreed orally with the plaintiffs to the effect that, if they did not have the

Apking v. Hoefler.

money with which to meet the payment on the 10th day of July, 1902, they might make the payment within a few days thereafter. There was judgment in favor of the plaintiffs for the sum of \$210.70. A motion for a new trial was overruled, and defendant prosecutes error to this court, his contention being that the court erred in not sustaining his demurrer *ore tenus*, and admitting parol evidence to vary the terms of the written contract, and for that reason that the judgment is contrary to law. The plaintiffs have not favored us with a brief and the case was submitted without oral argument.

We think both contentions of the defendant well founded. The rule is well settled in this state that, where a contract of sale has been consummated by writing, the presumption is that the writing contains the whole contract, and, in the absence of fraud, mistake or ambiguity of expression in the contract itself, parol evidence is inadmissible to change or vary its terms. *Nebraska Land & Feeding Co. v. Trauerman*, 70 Neb. 795, and authorities there cited. Even if the defendant agreed orally, after the contract was executed, that the plaintiffs might have a few days after July 10 to meet the payment maturing on that date, it was a naked promise, without consideration, and could not be enforced. It follows therefore that the court erred in the admission of oral evidence to vary the terms of the written contract. It is clearly apparent from the written contract that time was of the essence of it, and that the failure of the plaintiffs to meet the payment maturing on the 10th day of July, 1902, gave defendant the option to forfeit the contract and declare it at an end. This he has done, and the law will not aid the plaintiffs, under the circumstances in this case, to recover where the breach of the contract was their own.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed.

DUFFIE, C., concurs. ALBERT, C., not sitting.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

REVERSED.

SEDGWICK, J., not sitting.

CASES DETERMINED
IN THE
SUPREME COURT OF NEBRASKA
AT
SEPTEMBER TERM, 1905.

OSMOS C. HIGBEE V. STATE OF NEBRASKA.

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1905. No. 14,112.

1. **Embezzlement.** In a prosecution for embezzlement of a "right in action" under section 121 of the criminal code, it is not necessary to show that the defendant was at the time of the alleged embezzlement in the manual possession of the money or property which was the subject of the right in action. If the agent of a corporation so uses the rights in action of his employer as to prevent his employer from asserting those rights, and so deprives the employer of the property or money involved, and by so doing appropriates the property or money to his own use, without the assent of the employer, and with the fraudulent intent to so appropriate the same, he is guilty of embezzlement under the statute.
2. **Corporation: EVIDENCE.** The allegation of the information that the party injured is a corporation is sufficiently sustained by proof that it is a *de facto* corporation. Proof of the regularity of the proceedings to incorporate is not necessary.
3. **Venue.** Under this clause of the statute, converting rights in action to one's own use is an essential element of the crime. The venue is properly laid in the county where the purpose is formed to convert the right in action, and the decisive steps taken to carry out that purpose, although the subject of the right in action is situated in another county.
4. **Evidence** that the party against whom the right in action existed was solvent, and actually paid the money involved as directed by the defendant in adjustment of the right in action, is sufficient *prima facie* evidence of value.

Higbee v. State.

5. **Election.** When two counts of an information involve substantially the same facts, and call for the same evidence to support them, the court will not ordinarily require an election upon which count the prosecution will proceed.
6. **Instructions.** An instruction is not prejudicially erroneous because it states some of the elements of the crime charged and omits others, when the other elements are correctly stated and defined in other instructions. Instructions must not contain conflicting statements, and when read and construed together must correctly state the law.
7. **Erroneous Instructions.** An instruction which recites some of the essential elements of the crime charged and omits others, and tells the jury that the things recited in the instruction would constitute the crime, is erroneous and prejudicial, even though there was another instruction which contradicts it and correctly states the other things necessary to be shown to constitute guilt.
8. ———. In a prosecution against an agent for embezzling the rights in action of his employer, an instruction in which the jury are told that if the defendant "received credit in his individual capacity" for a right in action of the employer he would be guilty of embezzlement is erroneous. Unless the act is done with a felonious intent, and results in depriving the employer of his money or property, it is not embezzlement.*

ERROR to the district court for Sarpy county: ABRAHAM L. SUTTON, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

Nelson C. Pratt and E. S. Nickerson, for plaintiff in error.

Norris Brown, Attorney General, and William T. Thompson, contra.

SEDGWICK, J.

The Farmers Co-operative Shipping Association was engaged in buying grain at Gretna, in Sarpy county, and in shipping and selling the same. The defendant Higbee was in charge of the business as agent of this company. The George A. Adams Grain Company, of Omaha, was indebted to the Farmers Co-operative Shipping Association for grain, which the defendant as the agent of that

company had shipped and sold to the Omaha company. The defendant, who is plaintiff in error here, was prosecuted upon a charge of embezzlement; the information containing two counts. Upon the first count he was found not guilty. The charge upon which he was convicted is the embezzlement of "a certain right in action, to wit, a certain indebtedness then due and owing by the George A. Adams Grain Company, of Omaha, Nebraska, to the said Farmers Co-operative Shipping Association, for grain shipped to said George A. Adams Grain Company by the said Farmers Co-operative Shipping Association, in the amount of twenty-eight hundred nine & 53-100 dollars (\$2,809.53)."

1. The first contention made is that the indebtedness of the Omaha company to his employer was not within the meaning of the statute defining the crime of embezzlement and providing a penalty therefor. It is said in the brief: "The plaintiff is charged with embezzling a right in action, an indebtedness. Just how the plaintiff could obtain possession of an indebtedness we are at a loss to know." The language of the statute is: "If any officer, attorney at law, agent, clerk, or servant of any incorporated company or joint stock company shall embezzle or convert to his own use, or fraudulently take or make away with or secrete with intent to embezzle or fraudulently convert to his own use without the assent of his or her employer or employers, or the owner or owners thereof, any money, goods, rights in action or other valuable security, or effects whatever, belonging to any other persons * * * every such person so offending shall be punished in the manner provided by law for feloniously stealing property of the value of the article so embezzled." Criminal code, sec. 121. The evidence in this case tends to show that the defendant as managing agent of the company was in the control of its business in buying and shipping grain, and in collecting the proceeds thereof for the company. In this capacity he sold grain to the Omaha company, and instead of receiving the money for the use

of his employer as his agency contemplated, he caused the proceeds to be applied by the Omaha company to the adjustment of his speculations upon the board of trade. His contention now seems to be that he never had possession of the money, nor of any tangible thing that could be made the subject of embezzlement. Of course, if he had collected the money for his employer, as it was his duty to do, and then had without the owner's assent used it for his own benefit with intent to defraud the owner, there could have been no doubt that such action would have constituted embezzlement. The result reached by him was the same, so far as his individual business was concerned, as it would have been if he had first collected the money and used it in adjusting these speculations. At the common law possession was a necessary element of the crime of larceny, as it is by statute of embezzlement. The distinction between the two crimes depends upon the nature of the possession and the manner of obtaining it, and it would seem that a mere credit was not the subject of larceny at common law. It is within the province of the legislature to define crimes and provide punishment therefor, and to determine what action or conduct shall be deemed criminal and subject to punishment. The contention upon this point then depends upon the construction and meaning of the statute. It was, of course, competent for the legislature to make the act of defrauding his employer, by using the credits of the employer for the personal benefit of the agent without the assent of the employer and with the intent to defraud the employer, criminal, and to provide for the punishment of such act as embezzlement.

What is meant by the words "rights in action" as used in this statute? They are not the exact equivalent of choses or things in action. The term "chose (or thing) in action" is used in contradiction to a chose or thing in possession. It is used when the title to the money or property (the thing) is in one person, and the possession is in another. The word "rights" used in this connection

is a broader term. The legislature seems to have contemplated that an agent might use a mere claim or demand in such a way as to deprive the owner of the thing claimed, and to appropriate it to his (the agent's) own use. To do this with intent to defraud, and without the assent of the owner, is made embezzlement by this statute. Unless the owner is deprived of the thing (the money or property) involved in the transaction, there can, of course, be no embezzlement. *McCormick v. Keith*, 8 Neb. 142; *Western White Bronze Co. v. Portrey*, 50 Neb. 801. If his title to the property is not impaired, his right in action would still remain. Upon the trial the prosecution introduced evidence tending to show that the speculations upon the board of trade, in which these funds were used, were the individual transactions of the defendant. It was admitted that the transactions were carried upon the books of the Omaha company in the defendant's name. The defendant testified that in these transactions he was acting for his employer, and supposed at the time that the accounts were so kept. The jury must have found that he acted for himself in these speculations, and that his manipulation of the accounts of his employer was such as to cancel his employer's claim to the money as against the Omaha company, and so deprive his employer of the money owing by that company. The evidence upon this point is not entirely satisfactory, and the point is not discussed in the briefs. Because of these facts, and in view of the conclusion reached upon another feature of the case, we do not find it necessary to consider this matter further. It is sufficient to say that we consider the contention of the defendant that it is necessary to show manual possession and conversion of the money claimed untenable. If the agent of a corporation so uses the rights in action of his employer as to prevent his employer from asserting those rights, and so deprives the employer of the property or money involved, and by so doing appropriates the property or money involved to his own use, without the assent of the employer, and with the fraudulent intent to so ap-

propriate the same, he is guilty of embezzlement under the statute.

2. The next contention is that there is no competent proof of the corporate existence of the Farmers' Co-operative Shipping Association. There seems to be no merit in this contention. Articles of incorporation of this company were received in evidence, and they appear to have been filed with the county clerk. It was shown that the association had directors, and had elected officers and performed the ordinary functions of a corporation. The defendant contracted with this board of directors, and carried on the business under their employment. This is ample proof of a *de facto* corporation, and is all that is required. *Braithwaite v. State*, 28 Neb. 832.

3. Under this clause of the statute converting "rights in action" to one's own use is an essential element of the crime. The defendant was in Sarpy county, the business of his employer was being there transacted by him, and if, by his actions there, he so converted the rights in action of his employer as to violate this statute, the prosecution for the offense was rightly brought in that county. The objection that the courts of Sarpy county had no jurisdiction of this case was rightly overruled.

4. The evidence shows that the Omaha company was solvent, and that the claim of the employer was actually applied to the adjustment of the deals upon the board of trade. This is sufficient proof of value of the rights in action converted.

5. The two counts of the information involved the same facts, and called for the same evidence to support them. The court therefore did not err in refusing to require the state to elect upon which count it would proceed.

6. In the sixth instruction given by the court to the jury some of the elements of the crime of embezzlement are stated, and it is contended that the instruction is defective in that it omits other essential elements of the crime. To this contention, it is replied by the state that these elements are defined in other instructions, and that

the instructions, taken as a whole, are for that reason not objectionable. This would appear to be a sufficient answer to the objection that is made to this instruction, but the same objection is made to the thirteenth instruction given by the court, and this objection is not so satisfactorily answered. The thirteenth instruction is as follows: "You are instructed that if you find from the evidence, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the defendant, within three years prior to the filing of the information in this case, and within the time charged in the information, was the agent of the Farmers Co-operative Shipping Association, an incorporated company, and that while such agent he disposed of, or caused to be disposed of, any money or right in action of the said Farmers Co-operative Shipping Association, or secured credit for the same in his individual capacity and for his own use, or for the use of any other person except the said Farmers Co-operative Shipping Association, without the assent of the said Farmers Co-operative Shipping Association, that would constitute embezzlement of such money or right in action, as the case may be; and it would make no difference whether the amount embezzled, if any, was disposed of in the manner above indicated in one transaction, at one particular time, or consisted of a continuous series of acts." The jury were told by this instruction that, if they found from the evidence, beyond a reasonable doubt, certain facts, "that would constitute embezzlement." Did it omit essential elements of the crime charged? To constitute embezzlement there must be a fraudulent intent on the part of the accused to convert the property to his own use. The defendant must have made an intentionally wrong disposal of the property, indicating a design to cheat and defraud the owner. The instruction omits an essential element of the crime of embezzlement—the felonious intent. Not even the word "wrongful" was used in characterizing the defendant's acts. If the defendant did everything stated in the instruction, he would not be guilty of embezzlement. The attorney general does not defend this instruction, but

Higbee v. State.

contends that, when it is read in connection with other portions of the charge, the error, if any, is cured. It is true that instructions will be construed together, and the charge considered as a whole; but it is firmly established that "an instruction whereby the whole case is attempted to be covered, but which omits an essential element, is erroneous and is not cured by another instruction which covers the point." *Dobson v. State*, 61 Neb. 585; *Bergeron v. State*, 53 Neb. 752; *McAleer v. State*, 46 Neb. 116; *Barnes v. State*, 40 Neb. 545. The instruction condemned in *Dobson v. State*, *supra*, is similar to the one in the case at bar. It purported to define larceny, but omitted the felonious intent. NORVAL, C. J., speaking for the court, said: "By this instruction the court attempted to cover the whole case. If it omitted an essential element of larceny, the giving it was error. * * * This is true, even though another instruction may include the element omitted in the one by which the court attempts to state to the jury the essential ingredients of the crime."

The instruction also tells the jury that, if the defendant "secured credit in his individual capacity and for his own use" for any right in action of his employer, he would be guilty of embezzlement. It is clear that, unless by securing this credit for himself he deprived his employer of the right in action, by destroying or alienating his title to the subject of that right, and unless he did this with the felonious intention of so depriving his employer, he could not be guilty of embezzlement. For these reasons, this instruction was erroneous, and the verdict cannot be supported.

The judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded.

REVERSED.

RICHARD S. HORTON, TRUSTEE, v. WILLIAM HAYDEN ET AL.

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1905. No. 14,169.

Petition: SUFFICIENCY: STARE DECISIS. In an action to recover money that has been paid to defendant pursuant to a judgment in mandamus which was afterwards reversed, a petition which alleges only the payment of the money in obedience to the writ, and the subsequent reversal of the judgment in mandamus, without allegations of fact showing that the plaintiff is justly entitled to the money in controversy, does not state a cause of action. A judgment overruling a motion for restitution in the mandamus proceeding upon the ground that under the circumstances of the case the respondent was not entitled to an order of restitution, and that his remedy was in an action at law to establish his right to the money, will be adhered to. The rule of *stare decisis* will be applied.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: LEE S. ESTELLE, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

Hamilton & Maxwell and *Richard S. Horton*, for plaintiff in error.

Smyth & Smith, contra.

SEDGWICK, J.

The facts underlying this controversy are stated somewhat in detail in the opinion in *State v. Horton*, 70 Neb. 334. The order of the district court sustaining the motion of the respondent there to compel Hayden Brothers to make restitution was reversed, and the cause remanded to the district court, with instructions to dismiss the proceedings. The motion for rehearing was overruled in an opinion which may be found in 70 Neb. 343. It was there held that the general rule announced in *Hier v. Anheuser-Busch Brewing Ass'n*, 60 Neb. 320, that "upon the reversal of a judgment which has been executed it is the duty of the court to compel restitution," was not of universal application, and that restitution is not in all cases

Connolly v. State.

a matter of absolute right. It rests in the sound discretion of the court. It was said that under the circumstances of this case "the court would not, in this summary proceeding, order a return of the money in controversy," and that "this was not a proper case in which to summarily order a return of the money before the rights of the parties had been adjudicated in an action at law." 70 Neb. 343.

The petition in the case at bar counted solely upon the allegation that the money had been obtained by Hayden Brothers from the exposition company by the operation of the writ of mandamus, and that the order allowing the writ of mandamus had been reversed, and that cause dismissed. There was no allegation of any facts from which it could be found that Hayden Brothers were justly indebted to the exposition company or to the trustee in bankruptcy. It was determined in the former decisions cited that allegations identically the same as those contained in this petition did not, under the circumstances disclosed in that case, entitle the trustee in bankruptcy to any relief. We were satisfied, then, with the conclusion reached, and we see no ground now to change our views. The district court sustained a general demurrer to the petition, and the plaintiff electing to stand upon the petition, the action was dismissed.

This judgment of the district court was right, and is

• AFFIRMED.

JAMES CONNOLLY V. STATE OF NEBRASKA.

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1905. No. 13,867.

1. **Instructions: REVIEW.** It is not error to refuse to give instructions requested by the defendant on the law of self-defense, if the court has already by instructions given on his own motion properly submitted that question to the jury.

2. — : —. It is not error to refuse an instruction correct in principle, where the evidence is not such as to make it applicable.
3. **Improper Statements of Counsel: Review.** Alleged improper statements of counsel, made while arguing a case to the jury, to be available on error, must have been objected to at the time they were made and the ruling of the court invoked thereon; and the record of such statements, together with the objections thereto and the ruling of the court thereon, must be preserved in the bill of exceptions.

ERROR to the district court for Sioux county: WILLIAM H. WESTOVER, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

R. C. Noleman, Fred Wright, Grant Guthrie and M. F. Harrington, for plaintiff in error.

Frank N. Prout, Attorney General, and Norris Brown, contra.

BARNES, J.

On the 15th day of March, 1904, the plaintiff in error, James Connolly, shot and killed one Henry H. Miller, in Sioux county, in this state. He was tried for the crime on an information charging him with murder in the first degree, and was found guilty of manslaughter. From a judgment sentencing him to imprisonment in the state penitentiary for a term of eight years he prosecutes error. On the trial it was admitted by the accused that he shot and killed the deceased, and he defended himself against such action on the ground of justifiable homicide. There are seventeen assignments of error in his petition, but in his brief and on the oral argument only three of them were relied on for a reversal of the judgment of the trial court. The record discloses that the accused introduced some evidence tending to show that the deceased was a man of violent temper and quarrelsome disposition; that he had made some threats against the accused, both communicated and uncommunicated; that the accused had been well and intimately acquainted with the deceased for

about twelve years, and that the deceased was approaching him in a threatening manner at the time he fired the fatal shot.

It is contended that the court erred in refusing to give the jury an instruction, tendered by the accused, submitting his theory of self-defense. The instruction tendered specifically directed the attention of the jury to the evidence tending to show the bad character and violent temper of the deceased. This instruction was refused for the reason, as stated by the trial court, that he had already instructed the jury on his own motion in relation to that matter. The record discloses that paragraphs fifteen and sixteen of the court's instructions properly submitted the question of self-defense as applied to the evidence above mentioned. In the latter part of paragraph sixteen the court said: "The rule in such cases is this: What would a reasonable person, a person of ordinary caution, judgment and observation, in the position of the defendant, seeing what he saw, and knowing what he knew, suppose from this situation and these surroundings? If such reasonable person, so placed, would have been justified in believing himself in immediate danger, then the defendant would be justified in believing himself in such peril, and in acting upon such appearance." Having given the instruction above quoted, the court properly refused to give the instruction tendered by the accused. Where the substance of an instruction asked for has been given by the court on his own motion, the party tendering the instruction cannot complain of its rejection by the court. *Bush v. State*, 47 Neb. 642; *Carrall v. State*, 53 Neb. 431.

The accused further contends that he had the right to shoot and kill the deceased in order to prevent the commission of a felony, and that the court erred in refusing to give an instruction tendered by him presenting that theory of his defense to the jury. In order to determine this question, it is necessary for us to give at least a summary statement of what was shown by the evidence

introduced at the trial. It appears that the accused had in some manner obtained possession of a steer claimed by the deceased; that he had had possession of the animal for some length of time prior to the tragedy; that the deceased had knowledge of his possession of the animal, and that on the 14th day of March, 1904, the accused and the deceased were in the town of Alliance; that the accused there learned that the deceased was going to get the steer, and thereupon he started for his ranch, rode nearly all night, and arrived at home at about three o'clock on the morning of the 15th; that before noon of that day he armed himself with a Winchester rifle, mounted what was called a "buckskin" pony, rode to the ranch of his neighbor, Swanson, where the steer then was, drove it home and placed it in his own herd. About noon of the 14th inst. the deceased, accompanied by one Harry Dash, started on horseback from Alliance to find and bring away the steer in question. On the first day after leaving Alliance they reached the ranch of one Ellmore, about nineteen miles west and a little south of that place. They stayed there over night, and left Ellmore's ranch the morning of the 15th, at seven o'clock. From there they went to what is called the "Swanson Ranch," which they reached in the forenoon. They looked over the cattle on the Swanson ranch in search of the steer, but did not find it. At that time they saw a man driving an animal away. The man was riding a buckskin horse, and was going in an easterly direction toward the ranch of the accused. Thereupon the deceased and Dash started in the direction of Connolly's place, which was distant about a mile and a half southeast. After arriving at the ranch they looked among the cattle, and there found the animal they were searching for. After finding the steer, they rode over south of the ranch, and then east, and then came back to the windmill situated near the barn. It appears that their purpose in riding about the ranch was to find the accused. Not finding him, the deceased went up to the ranch house to see one Rea, who was working there, to

get some grain for the horses. Afterwards he came back, and about this time they noticed a buckskin horse down in the draw by some boulders or rocks, the reins of the horse's bridle being fastened to the rocks. They then rode down to where the horse was standing, but saw nothing of the accused at that time. They then rode back to the corral, and put their horses in the barn, where they fed them. After coming out of the barn, they saw the accused on a knoll southeast of the corral, about 200 yards distant, in a crouching position on his hands and knees, apparently crawling on the ground and looking toward them. It appeared to them that he crouched lower after he saw they were looking his way. When the deceased saw Connolly, he started to go out where he was. When he came within 50 or 60 yards of him, the accused fired the shot that almost instantly killed the deceased. It appears that during all the time intervening between the time Miller left the barn and until he was shot by the accused he was seen and observed by Harry Dash; that he was a one-armed man, 63 years of age, and at the time of the tragedy had no weapon of any kind on his person. The evidence of the state shows that before the shot was fired no conversation had taken place between the deceased and the accused; and that immediately before the shot was fired the arm of the deceased was swinging by his side. It further appears that the accused, after he had shot the deceased, immediately left the scene of the tragedy.

The foregoing facts are not disputed, except in so far as the evidence of the accused differs from the evidence of the state as to what took place at the time the tragedy occurred. Connolly testified in his own behalf, in substance, as follows: "I looked up. I had taken off my shoes to take some cactus out, or my boot, rather, and I looked and saw Mr. Miller in about 50 or 60 feet of me. He said: 'What are you doing there?' And I said: 'I am here attending to my business. What are you doing here?' He said: 'I am here after that steer (pointing to where

there was a bunch of cattle).' I said: 'That is my steer, Miller, and you can't take him without you have an officer, or a writ of replevin.' He was walking right along toward me, slowly. He said: 'You go in the house and stay there until I take this steer.' I said: 'I will do no such thing. I will stay here and see that you don't take the steer.' He said: 'Damn you, I will fix you right here.' He run his hand in his pocket, and ran right toward me. When he was within about 20 feet (my gun was lying beside me), I jerked it up and shot quick, like that."

It is apparent from the foregoing evidence, given by the accused himself, that at the time he fired the fatal shot the deceased was neither in the act of committing, nor was he about to commit, a felony. He was not attempting to take possession of the steer in question, and even if he had made such an attempt, openly and under a claim of ownership, he would not have been guilty of a felony. Nay, more than that, even if he had succeeded in taking forcible possession of the steer under a *bona fide* claim of ownership (and it is not shown or contended that his claim was not made in good faith), he would not have been guilty of a felony. His offense, at most, would have been no more than a trespass. So the evidence of the accused did not even tend to support his claim that he fired the fatal shot to prevent the commission of a felony. It is true that the defendant in a criminal case is entitled to have his theory of his defense submitted to the jury by proper instructions. But there must be at least some evidence to support such a theory before it can be submitted. There was no evidence in this case which would support the instruction tendered, and it was, for that reason, properly refused.

Lastly, it is contended that a new trial should be granted for misconduct of the prosecuting attorney. We find attached to the transcript a couple of affidavits made by counsel for the accused, in which are set forth certain statements alleged to have been made by the county at-

Young v. State.

torney in arguing the case to the jury. These statements or strictures, however, if they may be called such, were of a mild nature, and it is doubtful if they were at all prejudicial to the rights of the accused. Again, the record fails to show that they were objected to, or that the trial court was asked to make any ruling thereon. To make such statements available, they must be preserved in the form of a bill of exceptions. *Wright v. State*, 45 Neb. 44; *Korth v. State*, 46 Neb. 631; *Holt v. State*, 62 Neb. 134. The affidavits above mentioned are not preserved in or made a part of the bill of exceptions, as required by the authorities above cited, and for that reason we have no authority to consider them.

From an examination of the whole record we are satisfied that the accused was given a fair and impartial trial. Indeed, every doubtful proposition seems to have been resolved in his favor. He was allowed to introduce evidence of the character and disposition of the deceased, without regard to its competency, and we are impressed with the idea that the evidence in this case would have sustained a conviction for a higher degree of crime than manslaughter. In fact, it is apparent that the accused ought to be well satisfied with the verdict of the jury and the judgment and sentence of the court.

There being no reversible error in the record, the judgment of the district court is hereby

AFFIRMED.

JAMES YOUNG V. STATE OF NEBRASKA.

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1905. No. 14,119.

1. **Homicide.** Where one is assailed in his home or domicile, or the home is attacked, he may use such means as are necessary to repel the assailant from the house, or prevent his forcible entry or material injury to the home, even to the taking of life; but a homicide in such a case would not be justifiable, unless the slayer, in

the careful and proper use of his faculties, *bona fide* believes, and has reasonable ground to believe, that the killing is necessary to repel the assailant or prevent his forcible entry.

2. **Domicile.** A box stall at a fair ground provided with inside fastenings to its doors, which is prepared and used by a man as his office and sleeping apartment, the place where he resides, he having no other place of abode, and which contains his clothing, his money, and all of his belongings, is in legal effect his home or domicile.
3. **MURDER: DEFENSE: INSTRUCTIONS.** Where a defendant charged with the crime of murder admits the killing, defends his action as justifiable in defense of his person and his domicile, and introduces competent evidence tending to establish his theory of the homicide, he is entitled to have the jury instructed on the law of such defense.
4. **Criminal Law: INSTRUCTIONS.** It is the duty of the trial judge, particularly in criminal actions, to instruct the jury as to the rules of law governing the disposition of the cause, whether he is requested to do so or not; and if a charge to a jury, by omission to instruct on certain points, in effect withdraws from their consideration an essential issue of the case, it is erroneous.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county:
EDWARD P. HOLMES, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

R. D. Stearns, W. W. Towle and W. P. McCreary, for plaintiff in error.

Norris Brown, Attorney General, and William T. Thompson, contra.

BARNES, J.

James Young, who will hereafter be called the accused, was tried in the district court for Lancaster county on an information charging him with murder in the first degree for the killing of one Samuel Winter. He was found guilty of murder in the second degree, and was sentenced to imprisonment in the state penitentiary for a term of fifteen years, and from that sentence he prosecutes error.

It appears from the evidence that the accused was located at the State Fair grounds, near the city of Lincoln,

during the summer of 1904, and there had charge of some trotting horses owned by one Brownell; that he was authorized to employ assistants, and had full power to discharge them; that he prepared one of the stalls at the grounds for, and used it as, his office and sleeping apartment, having provided its doors with inside fastenings, consisting of hooks and staples; that during the summer, and up to about the 1st of September, he had in his service Max Wagner, Samuel Winter (the deceased), and a colored man of the name of Milt Basil. It further appears that on or about the last day of August he discharged Winter, and on the evening of September 1st met him in the city of Lincoln, and paid him his wages, giving him \$4 more than was his due; and the deceased at that time declared his intention to go to Denver, Colorado. The accused thereafter returned to the fair grounds in company with one John Wright, arriving there about midnight. After drinking some coffee at a lunch counter, he went to the stalls where the horses which he had charge of were kept, and ascertained that they had not been properly cared for. For this neglect he found some fault with Wagner and Basil, but no serious difficulty occurred between them. He then went to his sleeping apartment. He claims that before going to bed he heard some persons, whom he recognized by their voices as Wagner and the deceased, talking about "doing him up," as he expressed it. He thereupon went down the line of stalls to where one Vorhees was lying on a cot, and told him not to go to sleep, as he feared there would be trouble. He then returned to his apartment, placed his revolver under his pillow, undressed, and went to bed. Shortly afterwards, and about two o'clock on the morning of September 2d, Wagner and the deceased forced open the doors and entered the stall where the accused was sleeping. The evidence is conflicting as to what was there said and done by them. The accused, however, admits that he seized his revolver and fired three shots at them, or in their direction, with the result that Wagner was wounded in

the arm, and the deceased was shot in the hip, the ball entering the abdomen, thus giving him a wound which caused his death. At the trial it was the theory of the defense that the accused was justified in firing the fatal shot in defense of his domicile and his person, and at the conclusion of the testimony he tendered certain instructions fairly submitting that defense to the jury, and requested the court to give them. They were refused, and he excepted to such refusal. It further appears that the court failed to instruct the jury on the law of this theory of the defense on his own motion, and such refusal and failure to instruct are now assigned as grounds for a reversal of the judgment of the trial court.

It is well settled in this state that it is the duty of the trial judge, particularly in criminal actions, to instruct the jury as to the rules of law governing the disposition of the cause, whether he is requested to do so or not; and if a charge to a jury, by omission to instruct on certain points, in effect withdraws from the consideration of the jury an essential issue of the case, it is erroneous. *Pjarrou v. State*, 47 Neb. 294; *Dolan v. State*, 44 Neb. 643; *Long v. State*, 23 Neb. 33. The first question, then, for us to determine is: Was the stall or apartment occupied by the accused in a legal sense his domicile at the time he fired the fatal shot?

It appears from the evidence that the accused was a single man, and it was not shown that he had any home or place of abode other than the one where the tragedy occurred. The evidence also shows that he came there with Brownell's horses early in the spring of 1904 and had lived there continuously from that time until the shooting took place; that he had fixed up box stall No. 47 for his office and sleeping room, and had put inside fastenings on the doors; that he had therein his bed, his trunk, all of his clothing, his money, and the harness, boots and other things used by him in training and racing the horses which were in his charge. In fact, it was the only home he had. It was the place where he lived, his

only place of residence. Text writers, so far, have been unable to agree upon a legal definition of the word "domicile," or rather as to what is a man's domicile. We find, however, in 14 Cyc. 831, a quotation from *Smith v. Croom*, 7 Fla. 81, defining the word as follows:

"We like this conception of the word *home*, which constitutes the commanding element of the definition given in the Roman law, as well as those given by two modern jurists. It is the word whose essential meaning comes up fully to our idea of domicile. It is a word which admits not of qualification. To speak of a *permanent* home is to perpetrate a tautology. To speak of a *temporary* home is to involve a contradiction of terms. It is a word which finds its true interpretation in the instincts of our nature. It is a word the full meaning of which is of universal application; it is understood alike by the degraded savage and the classic Greek—by the republican serf and the refined Roman. Wherever that spot is found, there the law fixes the domicile."

This definition seems to be a reasonable one, and it fully meets with our approval. The word domicile or dwelling has, in cases like the one at bar, received a most liberal construction. In *Pond v. People*, 8 Mich. 149, a building 36 feet distant from a man's house, used for preserving nets employed in the owner's ordinary occupation of a fisherman, and also as a permanent dormitory for his servants, was held to be in law a part of his dwelling or domicile. So, bearing in mind the rule "that no man shall be deemed to be without a domicile" (14 Cyc. 836), we are of opinion that the place where the shooting occurred was, within the meaning of the law, the domicile of the accused.

This brings us to the question: Was there competent evidence introduced on the trial tending to show that the accused killed the deceased in defense of his person and his domicile? The defendant was sworn and testified in his own behalf, in substance, as follows: "And after I went to bed I laid quite a while, and I knew Max was

drinking, and I knew his disposition when he was drinking; he was notoriously bad tempered. After a while I thought it was just more talk than anything else, so I covered up, and was just about half asleep, and they came around to the door. I heard some one speak. I woke up and lit the lantern, and some of them was over against the door. I said: 'Whoever that is, go away from the door.' And just at that the door was jerked open. The foot of my cot came right up to the door, like this (indicating). Here is the door, here (indicating). Here was my cot (indicating). And Wagner said: 'You s—— of a b——, here is the man that said you was going to fire all of us Friday.' I said: 'Max, so far as you are concerned, you come around tomorrow, when you are sober, and I will talk to you.' I said: 'I have settled with Sam, and have nothing to say to him.' He said: 'You s—— of a b——, I will cave your head in with this lantern.' Sam made the remark: 'I will cut your guts out and hand them to you.' When he made his first remark, 'We come to do you up,' I shot right through the door. I said: 'Now, Max, you had better go out.' He raised the lantern. I turned over again, and shot in his direction, and was getting out of bed. I shot three shots. After I shot the third time, Max turned and ran out. Sam went to the door, I got out of bed. I said: 'Now, Sam, get out of here, you are coming around to cause trouble after I discharged you.' I said: 'Now, Sam, I have always used you right in every way.' He said: 'Yes.' I said: 'I have tried to use you like a man, and give you the easy side of it since you have been at work, and you come around now and make a disturbance.' He turned and walked around the barn. That was the last I seen of him. I didn't know at that time that I had shot Winter."

The testimony of witnesses Carter and Towle in a measure corroborates the foregoing statements. They both testified that Wagner said to them: "We went there to get even with that d——d nigger by giving him a good pounding, and we got the worst of it." It is true that

Wagner tells a different story as to what occurred after he and deceased forced open the stall door. And Winter, in his so-called dying declaration, said nothing about threats or hard words at the time the shooting occurred. With these conflicting statements in evidence, it was for the jury to determine who of the witnesses was entitled to the most credit, and which of them should be believed; and it was error for the court, by refusal to instruct, to ignore any part of the evidence. So we are satisfied that there was sufficient evidence introduced in support of defendant's theory of the homicide to require the court to submit it to the jury by proper instructions.

Where one is assailed in his home, or the home is attacked, he may use such means as are necessary to repel the assailant from the house, or prevent his forcible entry or material injury to his home, even to the taking of life; but a homicide in such a case would not be justifiable, unless the slayer, in the careful and proper use of his faculties, *bona fide* believes, and has reasonable ground to believe, that the killing is necessary to repel the assailant or prevent his forcible entry. *State v. Peacock*, 40 Ohio St. 333; *Marts v. State*, 26 Ohio St. 162; *Pond v. People*, 8 Mich. 149; *Brown v. People*, 39 Ill. 407. The instructions asked for by the accused embodied the foregoing principle in apt and suitable language, and yet the court refused to give them, and failed to so instruct on his own motion. That this was reversible error there can be no question.

Many other assignments of error are ably presented by counsel for the accused, which we decline to consider, because a new trial must be granted for the error above mentioned; and it is to be presumed that the district court will correctly determine all questions which may arise on the next trial of the accused.

For the refusal to give the instructions asked for on an essential issue of the case, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause is remanded for a new trial.

REVERSED.

IN RE ALGOE.

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1905. No. 14,337.

Constitutional Law. The subject of chapter 93, laws 1901, which provides penalties for blackmail, extortion and kindred felonies, is expressed by its title with sufficient clearness to meet the requirements of section 11, article III of the constitution.

APPLICATION of Lillian Algae for a writ of habeas corpus. Writ denied.

John O. Yeiser, for applicant.

Norris Brown, Attorney General, and *William T. Thompson*, contra.

BARNES, J.

Lillian Algae was charged in the district court for Douglas county with violating the provisions of section 2, chapter 93, laws 1901, entitled "An act to provide penalties for blackmail, extortion and kindred felonies." To that charge she pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to pay a fine of \$250 and the costs of the prosecution, and to stand committed until said fine and costs were paid, or she should be otherwise discharged according to law. In default of payment she was placed in the custody of the sheriff, and was by him confined in the common jail of Douglas county. To regain her liberty, she filed her petition for a writ of habeas corpus in this court. A writ was issued directed to said sheriff, returnable on the 6th day of July, 1905. To said writ the respondent made return, setting forth the foregoing facts as his warrant for her detention, and also a plea of former adjudication. The petitioner demurred to the return, and the cause was thereupon submitted to the court.

Her first and principal contention is that the provisions of the act in question, and especially of the section thereof

In re Algee.

under which she was prosecuted, are broader than its title, and violative of that clause of section 11, article III of the constitution, which provides: "No bill shall contain more than one subject, and the same shall be clearly expressed in its title." To support this contention counsel cite *State v. Persinger*, 76 Mo. 346. That case clearly announces the principle contended for; but an examination of the act there under consideration discloses that the legislature of Missouri, under the following title: "An act to change the penalty for disturbances of the peace"—not only changed the penalty for that crime, as already defined by the statutes, but also included therein other acts which had not theretofore been declared disorderly conduct, making them a crime and fixing a penalty therefor. The supreme court of Missouri could well say in that case that the title to the act gave no notice that a new definition of what should constitute disorderly conduct was to be given therein. Indeed, by the plain language of the title it clearly appeared that nothing was to be accomplished by the act but a change of penalty for the violation of the provisions of an existing penal statute. It is quite clear that the title to the act in that case was much narrower in its scope than the one in question herein. Therefore we do not feel constrained to follow that decision. The question involved in this controversy has not heretofore, in its present form, been presented to us. But one quite analogous to it was decided in the case of *Granger v. State*, 52 Neb. 352, where we held that a title which read, "An act to punish cattle stealing and to punish persons receiving or buying stolen cattle, and to punish all persons harboring or concealing cattle thieves," was broad enough to embrace provisions defining such crimes and providing a punishment therefor, although there was another statute in existence which defined the crime of cattle stealing. That case was followed and approved in *Ream v. State*, 52 Neb. 727. Again, it appears that this question was before the supreme court of Kansas in *State v. Dunn*, 66 Kan. 483. There the title to the act

was, "An act to punish pickpockets." And it was held to be broad enough to cover a definition of the crime, as well as to provide a punishment therefor. These authorities would seem sufficient to sustain the validity of the section of the act in question. It may also be said that on principle, as well as precedent, we should hold the act in question valid. As was said in *Wenham v. State*, 65 Neb. 397:

"Courts should never usurp legislative functions, and before declaring a law unconstitutional we should be fully convinced that it clearly conflicts with some provision of the fundamental law, some clause of the constitution, either national or state."

The purpose of the clause of our constitution above quoted was to prevent surreptitious legislation; and if the title to an act is sufficiently comprehensive to indicate to the legislature and the public the matters actually embraced therein, it cannot be said to violate that provision of the fundamental law. From the language of the title to the act in question it was to be expected that the legislature would define blackmail and extortion. The meaning of the word "blackmail" is well known and understood, and its definition as it appears in the body of the act is just what we would expect it to be by a glance at its title. Rapalje says: "Blackmail is an extortion of hush money; obtaining value from a person as a condition of refraining from making an accusation against him, or disclosing some secret calculated to operate to his prejudice." And extortion is a synonymous term. The provisions of the act in question are clearly expressed by this definition, and it is not to be believed that the legislature was, or that the public will be, deceived by the title as to what is contained in the body of the act. We are therefore of opinion that the passage of the act was in all respects a valid exercise of legislative power. This view of the case renders it unnecessary for us to determine the effect of the respondent's plea of former adjudication, and we therefore decline to consider it.

For the foregoing reasons, the demurrer to the return to the writ is overruled, the writ is quashed, and the petitioner is remanded to the custody of the respondent.

JUDGMENT ACCORDINGLY.

HOLCOMB, C. J., not sitting.

ROBERT W. MCGINNIS ET AL. V. R. K. JOHNSON COMPANY.

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1905. No. 13,775.

1. **Pleading: MOTION.** A denial in an answer that the oral contract alleged by the plaintiff was made, together with a statement that a contract was made at the time alleged differing substantially from the one set up by plaintiff, is not subject to a motion to strike on account of changing the issues from a general denial, since the allegation that a different contract was made is a mere matter of evidence, tending to prove that the contract declared upon was not made. Such allegations may be superfluous and redundant, but do not change the issue.
2. **Sale: DELIVERY.** Where coal from a mine in Illinois was ordered from a wholesale coal dealer in Nebraska on December 7, 1901, to be delivered to the buyer at Valparaiso, Nebraska, for the winter trade, an offer to deliver the same upon March 28, 1902, is such an unreasonable delay in delivery as to release the buyer from the obligation to take and pay for the same, no good reason for the delay being shown.
3. **Delivery: QUESTION FOR COURT.** In such a case the court may determine whether the offer to deliver was made within a reasonable time as a matter of law, and it is unnecessary to submit the question to the jury for determination.
4. **Appeal Bond: AMENDMENT.** It is not error for the district court to allow an appellant to file an amended appeal bond within a specified time, to take the place of a bond irregular and defective in form.

ERROR to the district court for Saunders county: BENJAMIN F. GOOD, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

C. E. Abbott and B. E. Hendricks, for plaintiffs in error.

L. E. Gruver, contra.

LETTON, C.

This action was originally brought in justice court to recover damages for the breach of a contract of sale and delivery of two cars of coal sold by the plaintiffs to the defendant. The bill of particulars alleged that an order was given to plaintiffs for two cars of coal, the delivery of one car to the defendant and payment therefor, and the tender to it of the second car and its refusal to accept the same. No answer was filed, but a continuance for 30 days was granted at defendant's request. The defendant failed to appear at the time to which the cause was continued. A trial was then had, and upon the evidence adduced the court found in favor of the plaintiff and against the defendant and rendered judgment accordingly. An appeal was duly perfected from this judgment to the district court. The petition filed in that court is substantially the same as the bill of particulars in the justice's court. The defendant filed an answer, first, denying every allegation in the petition except as thereafter admitted; second, admitting that the coal was ordered, but setting forth in addition thereto that the coal was to be delivered in 30 days from the date of the order, that it was ordered expressly for winter trade, and that the delivery was not offered for nearly four months after the order was given and after the winter season was passed, and alleging further that the defendant before that time had rescinded and canceled the order on account of the nonfulfilment of the contract by the plaintiffs within the time limited. The plaintiffs thereupon filed a motion to the answer, asking the court to strike the same from the files for the reason that the allegations thereof were not in issue in the court below, and because of a change of

issues from those tried in the lower court. This motion was overruled, to which the plaintiff excepted.

This is the first error assigned. Since the defendant made no appearance in the justice's court, the allegations of the bill of particulars were to be taken as denied generally, and the plaintiffs were required to sustain the same by proper evidence. *Carr v. Luscher*, 35 Neb. 318. When they proved the making of the contract and the offer to deliver the coal to defendant within a reasonable time, its refusal, and the amount of damages sustained by reason of this refusal, they had made their case. In the district court the issues are required to be the same as those upon which the case was tried in the lower court, for otherwise it would be a new case and not an appeal. *Inglehart v. Lull*, 64 Neb. 758, 69 Neb. 173.

Does the answer tender a different issue from that presented in the justice court? The allegations of the answer deny the making of the contract sued upon, and allege the making of a different contract. Under the general issue as presented in the justice's court the defendant can only be permitted to show any fact which goes to disprove the facts alleged in the petition. The plaintiffs plead and rely upon an ordinary oral contract of sale and delivery. Under a general denial the defendant would be entitled to prove that the conversation in which the oral contract was claimed by the plaintiffs to be made was in fact different from what the plaintiffs' witness narrates, and that the agreement actually made was in fact different from the one alleged by limitations and conditions as to the time of the delivery of the coal. This would disprove the allegation that a contract was made such as is alleged and relied upon by the plaintiffs. While that part of the answer which pleads a rescission of the contract by the defendant was new matter, and not within the issues in the justice court, still the motion was made to the answer as a whole, and since a portion of the matter alleged therein was properly pleaded the motion was properly overruled.

At the conclusion of the testimony both parties moved for a directed verdict. The motion of the defendant to direct a verdict in its favor was sustained, the reason given by the court in the instruction being that the plaintiffs had failed to show that they delivered the coal within a reasonable time and because they failed to excuse the delay in the shipment of the coal. Plaintiffs duly excepted to the giving of this instruction, and the same is assigned here as error. The evidence upon the part of the plaintiffs was to the effect that its agent, J. A. Miller, took the order at Valparaiso for two cars of coal and one of salt on December 7, 1901, from R. K. Johnson, the managing agent of the defendant corporation, and that no stipulation was made as to the time of shipment or the size of the cars. The order was sent by him to the office of the plaintiffs at Fremont, Nebraska, and the coal was ordered shipped from a coal mining company in Illinois. On February 3, 1902, neither car had arrived, and the defendant wrote to the plaintiffs stating they needed the coal very badly and wished they would hurry it up. The first car reached Valparaiso on or before March 11, 1902, and was received and paid for by the defendant. On March 26, defendant wrote plaintiffs, stating that the other car had not come and "that it is now so late that we will be unable to use it." In reply to this the plaintiffs wrote that they were not responsible for the delay, and that since they had no other place for the car at this time they would expect defendant to take it. The second car arrived at Valparaiso on March 28. The defendant was notified of its arrival, but refused to accept it on account of the delay in delivery. The evidence does not show that any conditions or limitations were made in the contract with reference to the time of delivery. The contract therefore is nothing more or less than an ordinary contract of sale and delivery. In such a contract the condition is implied that the delivery shall be made within a reasonable time. The question presented here is whether or not this question in the instant case should have been decided

by the court or whether it should have been submitted to the jury under appropriate instructions. If there are no circumstances which might tend to excuse the delay, there can be no question that the lapse of nearly four months from the time of the giving of the order to the offer of delivery is so unreasonable that the buyer cannot be required to accept the goods, and the delay would be so clearly unreasonable that it would be the duty of the court to say as a matter of law that the buyer was excused thereby. Where there are circumstances of doubt or dispute as to the terms of the contract, or where facts are testified to which if believed by the jury might excuse the delay in delivery, then the question of whether delivery has been made according to the terms of the contract or whether the delivery has been made within a reasonable time under all the circumstances is a question for the jury.

We are of the opinion that the testimony as to an alleged usage of the coal trade that unless the buyer rescinds before the coal is shipped he cannot rescind thereafter, when considered in connection with the other facts, is no excuse for the delay. The knowledge of such custom was not brought home to the buyer. The coal was not shipped direct to the purchaser, it was billed to the seller, and the buyer had no control over the shipment. The seller was notified before the coal reached Valparaiso that the buyer did not want it, and its disposition was entirely within his own control. The defendant purchased the coal delivered at Valparaiso. It had a right to its delivery within a reasonable time, and after waiting from December 7, 1901, the date of the order, until March 26, 1902, without receiving the same, the delay was so unreasonable that it had the right to rescind the order at that time, which it did by letter of that date, and before the coal arrived at Valparaiso or before delivery was offered. We are of the opinion, under all the facts in this case, that the delay in delivery was so unreasonable as a matter of law that the district court was justified in giving the instruction complained of.

Larson v. Anderson.

Complaint is made of the appeal bond, which was irregular and defective, but an amended bond was given by leave of the district court, and we think there was no error in this action.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

BENT LARSON, APPELLEE, V. GUSTAVE ANDERSON, APPELLANT.

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1905. No. 13,844.

1. **Adverse Possession: TACKING.** Where during his lifetime a husband took possession of certain real estate, claiming title thereto, and lived upon the same with his wife and family as his home, and before the ten-year period of limitation expired the husband died, leaving his widow who continued to reside upon the same as her home, the possession of the widow may be tacked to that of the husband so as to raise the bar of the statute of limitation. *Montague v. Marunda*, 71 Neb. 305.
2. ———: ———. In such case the possession of the widow is a continuation of the adverse possession of the husband, and will not be presumed to be adverse to the claims of their children and heirs.
3. **Possession, by Widow: PRESUMPTION.** The widow's right to possession is by virtue of the marital relation, and will not be construed to be independent and hostile to that of her husband's heirs, unless by some means she brings to their attention the fact that she claims to own the property in her own right and adversely to any right derived through her husband.
4. **Estoppel.** Where one by his words or conduct wilfully causes another to believe in the existence of a certain state of things, and induces him to act on that belief so as to alter his own previous position, the former is concluded from averring against the latter a different state of things as existing at the same time.

APPEAL from the district court for Sarpy county:
GEORGE A. DAY, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

William R. Patrick and Samuel L. Winters, for appellant.

J. O. Detweiler, contra.

LITTON, C.

This is an action to quiet the title to a certain tract of land lying in Anderson's addition to the village of Bellevue, Nebraska. This tract consists of a part of block 10, and all of blocks 11 and 12 in said addition, together with the streets lying between said blocks. The plaintiff alleges that on November 16, 1887, and for more than three years prior thereto, one Anna C. Carlson and Andres Carlson, her husband, were the owners of this property; that their title to block 11 was by deed, and to the remainder of the premises by adverse possession of Anna C. Carlson for more than ten years; that said parties executed a mortgage on block 11, which was afterwards foreclosed, and the title to the same conveyed through said foreclosure proceedings to one Martin, and from him to one Charles G. Anderson who conveyed the same to the plaintiff; that after the title of Anna C. Carlson to the remainder of the property by adverse possession had become complete, she conveyed the same to Charles G. Anderson who conveyed to the plaintiff; that the defendant Gustave Anderson claims title to the premises, and plaintiff prays for a decree quieting title as against said defendant. The defendant answers, claiming title to the premises, averring that his father, Andres Carlson, took possession of the property in 1882, and held the same adversely to all persons until his death in 1890; that after his death the defendant himself went into possession of the same by virtue of his right as heir at law of his said

father, and that ever since said time he has been in adverse possession of the same, subject to the homestead and dower rights of his mother, Anna O. Carlson. He prays that the action be dismissed and the title to the premises quieted in the defendant. The reply is a general denial, coupled with an allegation that plaintiff's grantor, Charles G. Anderson, purchased the premises upon the defendant's representation that he would get an absolute title by buying from Anna O. Carlson, the defendant's mother; that Charles G. Anderson did so in reliance upon said representations, and that the defendant is estopped by such conduct to claim any title in the premises. The district court found in favor of the plaintiff and entered a decree accordingly, from which decree the defendant has appealed.

In 1883 Andres Carlson, the father of defendant, Gustave Anderson, and the grandfather of Charles G. Anderson, who is the son of Gustave, bought a tax certificate upon block 11, and soon after took possession of part of block 10, all of 11 and 12, and the streets lying between, inclosing the same with a fence and building a small house upon the tract. He lived upon the premises with his wife, Anna Carlson, as his home, claiming title to the same, until October, 1890, when he died. His wife continued to live there until March, 1902, when, on account of her frail physical condition, she went to the plaintiff's house, where she died in December, 1902. In his lifetime Andres Carlson and wife executed a mortgage on block 11. Upon a foreclosure of this mortgage the property was sold, bid in by Martin, the mortgagee, and sold by him to Charles G. Anderson, who afterwards conveyed the same to the plaintiff. As to this portion of the property there seems to be no room for disputing the plaintiff's title. So, also, as to a portion of block 10 described in a deed to plaintiff in which defendant joined. This conveyance is unimpeached, and the plaintiff's title seems clear, as against the defendant.

As to the remaining property, the only title shown

in any of the parties is a title derived by the adverse possession of Andres Carlson for seven years before his death and of his widow and heirs since that time. This brings us to the only question of moment in the case, and that is whether the possession of Mrs. Carlson after her husband's death operated to vest the title to the premises in her by adverse possession, or whether her possession was only a continuation of the adverse possession held by her husband so that the legal effect would be the same as if her husband had lived throughout the statutory period. In other words, did she hold adversely to all the world, including her husband's heirs, or did she hold adversely only as against the same persons to whom her husband's possession was adverse? The presumption is, in the absence of any evidence, that where the title to a homestead is in the husband, and the widow remains in occupation of the homestead after her husband's death, she claims by virtue of her homestead right, and her possession will not be construed to be adverse to the rights of the heirs, unless by some act on her part she indicates her intention to hold adversely to them. In the present instance it appears that Mrs. Carlson, after having been appointed administratrix of her husband's estate, took some steps to have a homestead set apart to her by the county court, though no order setting the same apart was ever made, so far as the evidence shows. In her application for license to sell real estate to pay debts, she sets forth the real estate belonging to her husband, including that in controversy, alleges that the portion involved in the action had been set apart to her as her homestead, and asks leave to sell the other real estate belonging to the deceased for the payment of his debts. This evidence strongly militates against the plaintiff's claim that she held the premises, claiming title independent of her husband's estate therein and adversely to all persons, including her husband's heirs, and the evidence taken as a whole fails to establish this contention. The plaintiff's title to this portion of the premises is derived

Larson v. Anderson.

through a deed from Mrs. Carlson to her grandson, Charles G. Anderson. We are convinced from the evidence that the only title she had thereto was the right derived from her husband's occupancy of the premises, and which, through her occupancy of the same as a homestead subsequent to his death, ripened into a perfect title in her husband's heirs, subject to her life estate. *Montague v. Marunda*, 71 Neb. 805. The plaintiff contends that the defendant requested Charles G. Anderson to purchase the property from his grandmother, and represented to him that she owned it all, and that since his son relied upon these statements in the purchase the father is now estopped from claiming any right to the premises, and therefore has no title to the same. The evidence to sustain this contention is virtually undisputed. The father urged the son to buy from his grandmother, stating that she owned the property and could give a good deed to it. The son then made the agreement that he would care for the old lady until she died in consideration for the transfer of the land. The defendant did not disclose at that time that the only estate his mother, Mrs. Carlson, had was her life estate by virtue of her homestead right, or that he claimed any title to the land, and at his request and relying upon his representations the son took the title. Having thus induced the son to assume the burden of his grandmother's care in consideration for the transfer of a good title to the premises, he cannot now be permitted to speak and claim a title that he then disowned. He afterwards concurred in this disposition of the property, living upon the land, acknowledging this son's title, and paying taxes upon it in his son's name, and it is now too late for him to change his position to his son's detriment.

The judgment of the district court is right and should be affirmed.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

Allison v. Fidelity Mutual Fire Ins. Co.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

EDWARD M. ALLISON ET AL., APPELLEES, V. FIDELITY MUTUAL FIRE INSURANCE COMPANY ET AL., APPELLANTS.

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1905. No. 13,860.

Judicial Notice. Courts do not take judicial notice of the existence of judgments or decrees in cases other than the then pending case, and a decree rendered in receivership proceedings is no exception to the rule.

APPEAL from the district court for Douglas county:
LEVING F. BAXTER, JUDGE. *Reversed with directions.*

Baldrige & De Bord, for appellants.

Isaac E. Congdon, contra.

LETTON, C.

This is an appeal from a decree of the district court for Douglas county allowing a claim against the receiver of the Fidelity Mutual Fire Insurance Company. The Fidelity Mutual Fire Insurance Company and the Merchants and Manufacturers Fire Insurance Company were mutual insurance companies organized and doing business under the laws of this state providing for mutual fire insurance companies. The respective companies were each in the custom of reinsuring with the other any risks which they did not wish to assume in their entirety. Both organizations became insolvent and were placed in the hands of receivers. The receiver of the Merchants and Manufacturers Fire Insurance Company claimed that the Fidelity Mutual Fire Insurance Company was indebted to the Merchants and Manufacturers Fire Insurance Company for a balance of \$2,532.79 due for assess-

ments on policies issued to it for such reinsurance, and a further sum of \$300 due for a reinsured loss, and that an assessment had been made by the district court in the receivership proceedings to that amount. An answer was filed to this claim, containing a general denial, a denial that an assessment had been made by the district court, and setting up a settlement between the companies, with other defenses not necessary to notice. No reply was filed to this answer.

Appellant insists that the affirmative allegations of the answer, not being denied by a reply, stand admitted, and that it is entitled to a dismissal upon the pleadings. As to this, it is not the usual practice to compel creditors of insolvent corporations whose affairs are being settled up by a receiver under the direction of the court to draw their claim with the nicety and formality required in ordinary legal procedure, nor are technical rules of pleading usually applied. In such a case as this, however, when it is apparent there is a substantial controversy between the parties, the better practice is for the court to direct issues to be made up, and the pleadings in such case should conform to and the issue be tried according to the usual methods of procedure in litigated cases. Since no issue was directed to be made up by the court, we will not at this time apply the strict rules of pleading, and therefore hold that this point is not well taken.

The claim of the appellee alleges that a decree entered in the case of *Wells v. Merchants & Manufacturers Mutual Fire Insurance Company* in the district court for Douglas county found that the Merchants & Manufacturers Mutual Fire Insurance Company had made certain assessments against the Fidelity Mutual Fire Insurance Company, and that the amounts set opposite the name of the Fidelity Mutual Fire Insurance Company in said decree under words "Unpaid Assessment" are the respective amounts due from said company to the Merchants & Manufacturers Company, and that the receiver should forthwith proceed to collect such amounts; and

that in order to raise a fund to fully pay and discharge the obligations of the Merchants & Manufacturers company, and receivership and expenses and costs, it was necessary to make a further assessment, and that the amounts set opposite the name of the Fidelity company in the decree under the word "Assessment" are the amounts of assessment, and that the receiver should forthwith proceed to collect the same. These allegations of the claim filed are denied by the answer. They constitute the foundation of the claim, and unless proved there is no evidence to support the decree. The proceedings are similar to an action upon a judgment or decree, and unless the judgment or decree is admitted by the answer, or taken *pro confesso* by default, it must be proved. But this may as well be said of any other decree or judgment rendered by the district court for Douglas county. Courts do not take judicial notice of the existence of judgments or decrees in cases other than the then pending case, and a decree rendered in a receivership proceeding is no exception to the rule. There is no competent evidence in the record to show that any such assessment was ever made or decree rendered as is declared upon, and hence the judgment is not supported by the evidence.

Since the case must be reversed and remanded, we think the district court should direct issues to be made up and further proceedings be had in like manner as in other litigated causes.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded, with directions to cause proper issues to be framed, if a new trial is desired.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded, with directions to cause proper issues to be framed, if a new trial is desired.

REVERSED.

LINCOLN TRACTION COMPANY V. KATHERINE M. SHEPHERD.*

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1905. No. 13,899.

Street Railways: NEGLIGENCE: EVIDENCE. In an action for damages by a passenger against a street railway company, where the defendant's liability rests upon the question whether or not a street car was suddenly and carelessly started as the plaintiff was about to alight therefrom, which is denied, the defendant is only required to furnish sufficient proof to rebut that produced by the plaintiff upon this point, and is not required to establish its freedom from negligence by a preponderance of the evidence.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: LINCOLN FROST, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

Clark & Allen, for plaintiff in error.

Stewart & Munger, contra.

LETTON, C.

This action is brought to recover for personal injuries which the plaintiff alleges she suffered while a passenger upon a street car belonging to the defendant company. She alleges that when she desired to alight she notified the motorman to stop the car; that after the car was stopped, and while she was in the act of alighting, the car was negligently, suddenly and violently jerked and started forward, thereby throwing her upon the brick pavement and causing severe injuries. The defendant, for answer, denied these allegations, and alleged that while the car was in motion the plaintiff carelessly and negligently alighted and stepped down upon the street, that by reason of her negligence in alighting from a moving car she fell upon the pavement, and that the injuries she received were the result of her own carelessness and negligence. These allegations were denied by the reply. A trial was had, resulting in a verdict and judgment for the plaintiff, from which the defendant prosecutes error. For conven-

* Rehearing allowed. See opinion, p. 374, *post*.

ience the parties will be designated as in the district court.

Defendant alleges that the court erred in giving instruction No. 11. This instruction, so far as material in this discussion, is as follows: "The burden of proof is on the plaintiff to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that she received the injuries while being transported by the defendant company at or about the time and place alleged, and that the negligence of the company was the proximate cause of such injuries, and that by reason thereof the plaintiff has sustained damages, and the amount of such damages. On the other hand, when the plaintiff has shown that she met with an injury while being transported by the defendant, arising from defendant's management and operation of its car, then the burden of proof is upon the defendant to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that it was not guilty of the negligent act complained of in the plaintiff's petition, and as set out in the first paragraph of these instructions." The complaint made of this instruction is that it is erroneous because it states that the burden shifted to defendant to disprove the "negligent act" complained of in the petition. The brief of defendant was filed before the opinions of this court in *Lincoln Traction Co. v. Webb*, 73 Neb. 136, and *Lincoln Traction Co. v. Heller*, 72 Neb. 134, were handed down, and is mainly taken up with an argument and citation of authorities for the purpose of establishing the rule laid down in these cases that it is error to instruct the jury, in substance, that it is only necessary for the plaintiff to prove that he was a passenger and was injured, and that the burden of proof is then upon the defendant to show by a preponderance of the evidence that it was not guilty of the negligent act complained of. So far, therefore, this court has already adopted the doctrine for which the plaintiff contends, and the only question necessary to consider in this connection is whether this instruction is in contravention of the principles laid down in the two cases mentioned.

Instruction No. 11 consists of two main propositions, the first of which is to the effect that the plaintiff must prove (1) that she received the injuries alleged while being transported by the defendant, (2) that the negligence of the company was the proximate cause of such injuries, (3) that by reason thereof she had sustained damages to a certain amount. The second proposition embraced in the instruction is (1) that, when the plaintiff has shown that she met with an injury while being transported, and (2) that the injury arose from the defendant's management and operation of its car, then the burden of proof is on the defendant to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that it was not guilty of the negligent act complained of. As to the first proposition, we have heretofore said that it is a general rule that the burden of proof is always upon the party maintaining the affirmative of an issue. *Rapp v. Sarpy County*, 71 Neb. 382, 385, *Lincoln Traction Co. v. Webb*, 73 Neb. 136. The first division of this instruction lays down this principle, and correctly informs the jury that the burden of proof is upon the plaintiff to show that the negligence of the company was the proximate cause of the injuries. The necessity of proving this essential element to establish the plaintiff's case was wholly omitted from the instructions given in the *Webb* and *Heller* cases. In those cases the jury were instructed that, when an injury to a passenger was proved, the negligence of the defendant was presumed, while in this instruction the jury are correctly told that the burden of proof is on the plaintiff to prove such negligence. As to the second division of this instruction, the jury were instructed that, after the plaintiff has shown that she met with an injury arising from the defendant's management and operation of the car, the burden of proof was upon the defendant to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that it was not guilty of the negligent act complained of.

It will be seen that the negligence charged in the petition consisted in the careless act of suddenly moving and

jerking the car when the plaintiff was in the act of alighting. The case is different from one in which a collision or derailment occurs, or where there is an accident to the machinery or appliances used as a means of transportation. In such case, evidence of that fact and of the plaintiff's injuries arising therefrom, without other proof, raises the presumption of negligence. The thing itself speaks—"*res ipsa loquitur*"—and this is the foundation upon which the doctrine rests. The plaintiff is not required in such a case to prove that the accident resulted from the defendant's negligence, on account of the hardship he would be under of being compelled to seek evidence which might lie wholly within the defendant's grasp and control. This subject is discussed and the reason for the rule clearly shown in *Lincoln Traction Co. v. Webb*, *supra*, the opinion citing the cases upon which the doctrine rests, and which are quoted in the brief of defendant in this case. In cases such as this, however, it is impossible to apply this rule. When the plaintiff had introduced testimony to substantiate the allegation that the proximate cause of her injury was the careless starting of the car while she was in the act of alighting, the defendant's obligation, in order to escape liability, was the same as in any other case of negligence. It was compelled to disprove this allegation, either by showing that the sudden movement did not happen, or that, although it happened, the defendant was exercising all due and proper care in the operation of the car at the time, and was free from negligence. The plaintiff was required to go further by her evidence than in a case where evidence is furnished by the thing itself. In such case, the legal presumption furnishes a part of the plaintiff's case. There was a direct conflict in the evidence as to whether or not the car stopped as plaintiff was alighting, and then started forward with a jerk, or whether the accident was caused by the plaintiff stepping from the car while it was in motion and before it stopped. The question whether or not the car was negligently started with a sudden jerk

while the plaintiff was in the act of alighting was the crucial point in the case, and to require the defendant to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that this negligent act did not occur was imposing a requirement upon it which the law does not justify. It was the plaintiff's duty to establish this allegation by a preponderance of the evidence. If the defendant produced merely sufficient evidence to balance that produced by the plaintiff upon this point, it was enough. The defendant was not compelled to introduce any evidence until the plaintiff had shown that the injury resulted from a negligent act, and after the plaintiff had introduced evidence to that effect it was only compelled to meet the same to the same extent as in other cases where damages are sought for injuries by reason of negligence, and was not compelled to establish its innocence by a preponderance of the evidence.

Plaintiff in an extensive and painstaking brief has cited cases from the courts of England and almost every state and territory in the United States using expressions that, where an injury to a passenger has been proved arising from the defendant's management and operation of the means of transportation, a presumption of negligence is raised, and the "burden is cast" upon the defendant to show that it was not negligent, or "that the defendant must show," or that "the burden of proof is upon the defendant," or "it rests upon defendant, to establish" freedom from negligence. Though the language employed in these cases is not exactly the same, and is used with more or less exactness, the idea intended to be conveyed is that which is expressed in *Lincoln Traction Co. v. Webb, supra*, as follows: "Where negligence is proved, or where from the nature of the accident which was the proximate cause of the injury negligence is presumed, the carrier is then required to show that it was in no wise at fault." But this is the extent of the burden imposed upon the defendant, and is the same in cases of carriers of passengers as in other cases of negligence, and the defendant is not required to overcome the plaintiff's

testimony by a preponderance of the evidence. In the instant case, as soon as the defendant convinces the jury that the evidence upon its part as to the sudden starting of the car is equal in weight and credibility to that of the plaintiff on this point, it is entitled to a verdict, and the jury should have been so instructed. Where the liability of the defendant depends upon a question of fact as to which there is a direct conflict in the evidence, an instruction which imposes a heavier burden upon it than is proper is prejudicially erroneous.

Defendant further complains of the overruling of a motion for a new trial upon the ground of newly discovered evidence. The evidence offered was cumulative in its nature, and it is a very close question whether or not it would influence the result upon a new trial. Since a new trial must be granted on account of the error in the instruction, the defendant will be afforded an opportunity to produce this further evidence at that time.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

REVERSED.

The following opinion on rehearing was filed April 18, 1906. *Judgment of reversal adhered to:*

1. **Negligence: BURDEN OF PROOF.** The rule that the burden of proof upon the issue of negligence does not shift during the progress of the trial, but rests throughout upon the party alleging such negligence, is based upon the better reason, and well supported by authority, and is established in this state as the correct rule.
2. ———: **EVIDENCE: PRESUMPTION.** When it appears, in an action against a common carrier for personal injury caused by the negligence of the carrier, that some defect in the appliances of the carrier, or some act of its employees in the conduct of its business, contributed to the accident which caused the injury complained

of, a presumption of negligence on the part of the carrier arises, and unless there is evidence against the presumption it will be sufficient to establish the allegation of negligence of the carrier.

3. **Instruction: BURDEN OF PROOF.** It is erroneous to refuse to instruct the jury that the party alleging facts from which a presumption of negligence would arise has the burden of proving the existence of such facts.

SEDGWICK, C. J.

The proposition announced in the opinion upon the former hearing that in actions for negligence the burden of proof is upon the plaintiff to establish the negligence of the defendant, and that this burden does not shift to the defendant during the progress of the trial, but remains with the plaintiff throughout the trial, we think is supported by the better reason and probably also by the best considered authorities. *Rapp v. Sarpy County*, 71 Neb. 385; *Omaha Street R. Co. v. Bosen*, p. 764, *post*. There is quite a comprehensive note upon this subject in connection with *Black v. Boston E. R. Co.* (187 Mass. 172), 68 L. R. A. 799. Many of the leading cases are cited and, after a consideration of these cases, the conclusion is reached: "The position of those who hold that the *onus probandi*, which, under the circumstances detailed, rests at the commencement with the one alleging the negligence of the carrier as the direct and proximate cause of the injury, continues to do so during the trial—is the more logical." There is no doubt that a duty of the highest order is placed upon the conductor of a street car to protect his passengers from danger by all reasonable means within his power. When a passenger is injured through some defect in the appliances of the carrier, or some act that is done by its employees in the conduct of the business, a presumption of negligence on the part of the carrier arises, and this presumption is sufficient, in the absence of any other evidence upon the subject, to supply the proof demanded of the plaintiff upon that point and establish *prima facie* the negligence of the

carrier. If unexplained by the carrier, no further proof upon that point is necessary to establish his negligence. But if evidence appears in the plaintiff's own testimony, or is offered by the defendant, sufficient to rebut this presumption, then the negligence of the carrier is not established by the presumption. In determining this question upon the whole evidence the burden of proof is upon the party who alleges negligence, and the proof must be sufficient to establish such negligence. The evidence tending to prove negligence of the carrier, including the presumption referred to as a part of such evidence, must preponderate, that is, the plaintiff must show by a preponderance of the whole evidence upon this point that the carrier was negligent and that this negligence contributed directly to his injury. Under this rule the instruction set out in the former opinion was erroneous. By that instruction the jury were told that under certain circumstances "the burden of proof is upon the defendant to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that it was not guilty of the negligent act complained of in plaintiff's petition." It is contended in plaintiff's brief that the instructions taken together show that the preponderance of the evidence required of the defendant by the instructions was limited to the proof of the facts which the defendant alleged from which due care on its part was to be derived. This would not affect the rule. But we do not think that the instructions can be so construed. The act complained of in the plaintiff's petition is stated in the instructions as the subject matter upon which the defendant must produce a preponderance of the evidence, and the jury must have understood this to refer to the plaintiff's cause of action as predicated upon the defendant's negligence.

2. It is earnestly argued in the plaintiff's brief that the former decision turns entirely on the question whether it is possible to apply in this case the doctrine of *res ipsa loquitur*. The question was discussed in the opinion, and it must be confessed that whether the doctrine can be ap-

plied to the solution of the matter presented to this court is not entirely clear. It was shown in the former opinion that it was claimed on the part of the plaintiff that she had signaled the conductor that she desired to leave the car, and that the car was stopped accordingly; that she thereupon proceeded to leave the car, and, when she had reached the steps and was about to alight, the car was suddenly started "with a jerk" which threw her to the ground and caused her injury. If the facts so alleged were established by the evidence, then the doctrine of *res ipsa loquitur* would apply. The sudden starting of the car, in the manner and under the circumstances alleged, while the plaintiff was properly on the steps and in the act of stepping to the ground, being the act of the carrier, would, if the cause of the accident, furnish a presumption of negligence on the part of the carrier. On the other hand, it was alleged by the defendant that the plaintiff, while the car was moving, carelessly attempted to step from the car to the ground, the motion of the car being such as to throw her down and cause the injury. In such case, no presumption of negligence on the part of the carrier would arise. The issue of fact thus sharply presented was not with clearness explained to the jury. The jury should have been told to determine this question of fact; and that if it was found to be as alleged by plaintiff the presumption above stated would arise; but if found as alleged by defendant, then the plaintiff, having by her own carelessness contributed to the cause of her injury, could not recover. The defendant requested the court to instruct the jury: "You are instructed that the burden of proof is upon the plaintiff to show that the car started with a jerk when she was in the act of alighting." The facts from which a presumption of negligence on the part of the defendant arises, must be proved before the plaintiff can have the benefit of such presumption. This request for instruction was along that line. A more accurate and comprehensive instruction upon this phase of the case was desirable, but the case could not be properly

Gutschow v. Washington County.

submitted without a statement of the vital point in dispute, and it appears that the refusal of the request was prejudicial to the defendant.

We think the conclusion reached upon the former hearing is right, and it is adhered to.

REVERSED.

JOSEPH GUTSCHOW, APPELLANT, v. WASHINGTON COUNTY
ET AL., APPELLEES.

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1905. No. 13,974.

1. **Contract: PERFORMANCE.** A contract which has never been begun is a contract "not completed within the time specified," under the provisions of section 20, article I, chapter 89, Compiled Statutes, 1903.
2. **Letting Contract.** The fact that the person to whom a contract is let under the provision of said section 20, requiring the contract to be let to the "lowest responsible bidder," is the only bidder, does not render the contract illegal, in the absence of fraud or collusion, or of any showing that the price is excessive or unreasonable.
3. **Notice: Bid.** A bid which proposes "to construct, excavate and complete by working sections" at a fixed price per cubic yard of earth responds to a notice that required bids to be made "by each working section," since the proposal means at the same price per yard for each working section or for the whole work.

APPEAL from the district court for Washington county:
LEE S. ESTELLE, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

E. C. Jackson, for appellant.

Frank Dolezal, Walton & Mummert and *E. B. Carrigan*,
contra.

LETTON, C.

This was an action brought by a taxpayer of the county of Washington, who was the owner of lands ad-

joining and affected by a proposed ditch improvement in said county, to enjoin the board of supervisors from letting a contract for the construction of the ditch. It appears that, after the preliminary proceedings required by the statute were had, the county board advertised for bids for the construction of the improvement, and in February, 1904, the contract therefor was awarded to Callahan Bros. & Katz, a firm of contractors. They filed the required bond, which was approved, and a contract was duly entered into between them and the county board for the construction of said ditch. The contract provided that the ditch was to be completed by the 15th of June, 1904. On June 1, 1904, on the application of the contractors, the time for completing the ditch was extended to January 1, 1905, under certain conditions. In July, 1904, the contractors declined to further proceed with the work on account of alleged irregularities in some of the proceedings of the board, and at a meeting on July 13 the board found that the contract had not been completed, nor had the work thereunder been commenced, and the contract was declared forfeited. The board then proceeded to advertise for bids for the construction of the ditch. At the time specified for the reception of bids the board met and, the bid of R. A. Brown & Company being the only one submitted, they awarded the contract for the construction of the ditch to that firm, whereupon this action was begun to enjoin them from entering into this contract. In the district court a demurrer to the petition was sustained, and judgment rendered dismissing the action, from which judgment plaintiff appeals to this court.

His first argument is that the only power given to the board to relet a contract for the construction of the ditch is given by section 20, article I, chapter 89, Compiled Statutes 1903 (Ann. St. 5519), which provides that "any contract not completed within the time specified, shall be reestimated and relet to the lowest responsible bidder, but not for a sum greater than the estimate, nor a second time to the same party"; that a contract which

has never been begun is not a contract "not completed," and that the words "not completed" imply something commenced and left unfinished. We are unable to discern the force of this argument. A contract, the work upon which has never been commenced, is certainly no nearer completion than one upon which part of the work has been performed. To adopt the construction contended for by the appellant would be to create the anomalous situation that, where a few shovelfuls of dirt had been thrown out in beginning the work of constructing a ditch, the board might relet the contract, but that, where nothing has been done at all, it was absolutely deprived of all power, and had reached an *impasse*. We will not lightly impute to the legislature such an intention, and we think the argument is without merit. If such were the law, the only means necessary to take to render abortive the whole proceedings would be to act as the first contractors did here—take the contract and fail to carry out its provisions.

The next point urged is that, since there was only one bidder, the contract was not let to the "lowest responsible bidder." *State v. Board of County Commissioners*, 13 Neb. 57, was a mandamus proceeding brought to compel the board of county commissioners of York county to enter into a contract with the relator for the purchase of certain stationery, on the ground that he was the lowest competent bidder therefor. It appears that two bids were filed with the board, but one of the bids was filed out of time and was not in accordance with the advertisement. This left the relator the only bidder. The court held that he was the lowest competent bidder and the writ was awarded as prayed. See, also, *Baum v. Sweeney*, 5 Wash. 712, 32 Pac. 778. It may often happen from the character of the work to be performed, or of the supplies to be furnished, that in a given locality one person alone may have the facilities and appliances necessary to fulfill the terms of the contract. It is a matter of common knowledge that extensive excavations, such as canals, ditches, or railway cuts, may be carried on much more cheaply and expedi-

tiously by the use of power machinery. A bidder equipped with such appliances may have so great an advantage over the ordinary individual as to make it useless to attempt to compete with him. Indeed, the bid of R. A. Brown, & Company in the instant case recites that they had "a suitable dredge machine, now idle and ready for immediate use." There is nothing alleged against the good faith of the bidder, nor is it averred that the price is excessive or the bidder not responsible. Apparently, neither the county board nor the bidder are to blame in any way for the failure of other persons to file bids. Some courts have held that, where there was only one bidder, he could not be said to be the lowest bidder, since he was also the highest bidder; but in the absence of fraud or collusion, or of any showing that the price is excessive or unreasonable, we see no reason for assuming this position.

The third objection made is that the contract exceeds the estimated cost of construction, and that the bid did not comply with the terms of the notice which called for bids for the construction of the ditch by working sections. The reestimate made under the direction of the board showed no change from the former estimate. The estimate makes the total cost \$42,705.84, the number of yards of earth to be excavated 388,344 cubic yards, and Brown's bid at 9½ cents a cubic yard makes the total \$35,912.57, which is within the estimate. The petition alleges that the amount of \$42,690.24 was adopted by the board of supervisors as the estimate of the cost of said improvement, after having ascertained all the expenses, compensation for land taken and damages; that the main item of cost in the estimate was for the excavation of the ditch, which under the bid of Callahan Bros. & Katz amounted to \$32,536.78, while Brown's bid aggregated \$35,912.57, whereby the estimate would be exceeded by \$3,375.79, which the board of supervisors had no authority to do. The petition, however, does not separate the items of the estimate so as to show what was originally estimated as the cost of excavation and construction. Brown's bid

Hensel v. Hoffman.

falls within the original estimate, and hence is not subject to the objection made by appellant.

As to the contention that the bid did not respond to the advertisement, because it was not made by each working section, this is a mistake, since the bidder proposed to "construct, excavate and complete by working sections" at and for the price of 9½ cents a cubic yard of earth. This means at 9½ cents for each working section, or the same rate per yard for all.

We think the judgment of the district court is correct, and recommend that it be affirmed.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reason stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

ALVIN R. HENSEL ET AL. V. WENZEL HOFFMAN.

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1905. No. 13,831.

1. **Erroneous Instruction.** An instruction which withdraws from the jury consideration of an issue of fact concerning which there is a conflict of evidence is reversible error.
2. **Pleading.** A formal admission of a mere conclusion of law in a pleading may be avoided by positive averments of fact in the same pleading which show the admission to be erroneous.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: **WIL-
LARD W. SLABAUGH, JUDGE. Reversed.**

McGilton, Gaines & Storey, for plaintiffs in error.

B. N. Robertson, contra.

AMES, C.

One Eggen was the owner and in possession of certain laundry machinery situate in a certain building in Omaha.

He executed a mortgage upon it to the defendant in error, plaintiff below, and turned the possession over to him by delivering to him the keys of the building in which it was situated. An execution upon a judgment against the mortgagor came into the hands of the plaintiff in error, defendant below, who was a constable. This is an action for conversion against the constable and the surety upon his official bond. The petition alleges that Hensel, under color of his office and by virtue of the execution, "wrongfully and unlawfully took from the possession" of the mortgagee the property in question and converted it to his own use, to the damage of the plaintiff. The answer admits that the constable levied the writ upon the property mentioned, and that he advertised it for sale under the writ and made a sale of it, but alleges "that neither at the time said chattels were levied on, nor at the time of the sale thereof of defendant Eggen's interest therein, nor at the sale, were said chattels disturbed or moved by the said Hensel, nor have they been moved at any time since by any one; and these defendants further allege that nothing whatever was done to place the property in controversy beyond the reach of plaintiff mortgagee, nor to prevent him from taking possession of it, nor has plaintiff ever been refused possession of said chattels, neither at the time of the levy nor since, by the parties to this suit," and that the property since the sale has been in the same building and condition in which it was at the time of the levy, and at all times subject and free to be taken possession of by the mortgagee, to whom possession had been tendered by the purchaser. Defendant in error contends that this answer admits the levy, and consequently a conversion of the property, if he was in possession and his mortgage was valid when the levy was made, which latter mentioned facts are not disputed; but the plaintiff in error argues, we think more cogently, that, if the negative averments of the answer are true, there was in reality no levy and no trespass, and that the formal admission of a levy is an admission of a mere conclusion of

law which is conclusively shown to be erroneous, and by which, therefore, plaintiff in error is not bound. The negative averments are put in issue by the reply, and the evidence with respect to them is conflicting. The answer further alleges that the constable did not know of the mortgage, or that the mortgagee was or claimed to be in possession thereunder, until the day before the sale was advertised to take place and did occur, when he was informed of it by an agent and attorney of the mortgagee, and agreed with him that the sale should proceed, but should be a sale of the mortgagor's interest only, subject to the lien of the mortgage, and that a statement to this latter effect was made publicly and in the hearing of the bidders when the sale was cried, and that such interest was all that the purchaser acquired or claimed by reason of the sale, as the mortgagee well knew, and that, if the latter had failed to take actual possession of the goods and sell them for the satisfaction of his debt, such failure was due to his own neglect or obstinacy, and not to any act or fault of the constable or purchaser, or anyone acting by the direction or under the authority of either of them. But these allegations are also put in issue by the reply, and the evidence concerning them is in conflict.

Two instructions are complained of. One is numbered 2 in the record, and is to the effect that the burden of proof is upon the plaintiff in error, defendant below, to establish by a preponderance of evidence that he did not at the time of the alleged levy "place said mortgaged chattels beyond the reach or control of the plaintiff, Hoffman." It is undisputed that the situation of the chattels did not change between the times immediately before the levy and after the sale. The levy, as we have already said, was, as we interpret the answer, practically denied, and it was expressly averred that the situation or possession of the goods was at no time disturbed, and that nothing was done to prevent access to them by the mortgagee. As respects the trespass, the real wrong or gravamen of the charge in the petition of the plaintiff, the answer did not differ

Hadacheck v. Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co.

in legal effect from a general denial, and the plaintiff was not relieved of the burden of making that charge good by a preponderance of the evidence. This instruction was therefore, we think, erroneous.

Exception was also taken to an instruction numbered 6 which told the jury, "If you believe from the evidence that the plaintiff Hoffman was in the possession of chattels mortgaged at the time the levy was made thereon by defendant Hensel, * * * you should find for the plaintiff and assess his recovery," etc. This instruction withdrew from the jury the defense that, although the chattels were at all times in the possession of the plaintiff, such possession was not disturbed; and the sale was made, by the agreement of the parties, expressly subject to the lien of the mortgage, and was nearly or quite equivalent, in the then state of the record, to a peremptory instruction to return a verdict for the plaintiff. We recommend therefore that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for a new trial.

LEWTON and OLDHAM, CO., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for a new trial.

REVERSED.

STEPHEN HADACHECK V. CHICAGO, BURLINGTON & QUINCY
RAILWAY COMPANY.

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1905. No. 13,887.

Judgments of Sister States: GARNISHMENT. The supreme court of the United States has exclusive final jurisdiction over the subject of the effect to be given in each state to the records and judgments of courts of sister states, and that court has held that a judgment in garnishment in one state is a bar to an action by the principal

Hadacheck v. Chicago, R. & Q. R. Co.

defendant against the garnishee to recover the same debt in the state of the residence of the former. *Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co. v. Sturm*, 174 U. S. 710.

ERROR to the district court for Gage county: WILLIAM H. KELLIGAR, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

A. D. McCandless and W. H. Ashby, for plaintiff in error.

J. W. Deweese, Hazlett & Jack and Frank E. Bishop, contra.

AMES, C.

This is a proceeding in error to reverse a judgment for the defendant in the district court. The plaintiff had been employed as a laborer in this state by the defendant, and had been discharged from such employment on the 19th day of December, 1902, when there was due him as wages, earned within the then next preceding 60 days, the sum of \$58.20, to recover which this action was brought. In the preceding April an action had been begun against the plaintiff in a justice's court in the state of Missouri, in which an attachment had been issued, and the defendant railway company served with process of garnishment as his debtor. To this process the company answered that it was not indebted to the defendant therein except for wages earned by him as a laborer within the then next preceding 60 days, which were exempt to him under the laws of Nebraska, the state of his residence. On the 12th day of April, 1902, the plaintiff also appeared in the Missouri court by plea and affidavit, setting forth the same matters contained in the answer of the company, and concluding with a prayer "that said moneys so attached be released." This prayer was granted by the court; but three days later the action proceeded to trial and a judgment in favor of the plaintiff therein for the sum of \$98.96. This judgment has never been impeached or satis-

fied, and a duly authenticated transcript of it, as well as of subsequent proceedings thereon, was offered and received in evidence in this case. On December 9, 1902, an execution upon it was issued, and new proceedings in garnishment were instituted against the company, which made answer to the like effect as that already recited, and the judgment defendant also appeared and moved to quash the proceeding, upon the ground that the judgment was void for want of jurisdiction over his person. Both objections were overruled by the court on the 19th day of December, and a judgment in the usual form was rendered for the recovery by the plaintiff in that action against the company of the sum of \$58.20, being the same money and for the identical indebtedness in dispute in the present suit. This latter mentioned judgment has not been in any manner impeached, but was satisfied and discharged by the company by payment, and the record and proceedings in the Missouri court were pleaded and proved in bar in this action.

In the face of the decision of the supreme court of the United States in *Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co. v. v. Sturm*, 174 U. S. 710, it cannot be contended that the judgments set out in the answer are subject to collateral attack, or that they are not an effectual bar to the present suit. That court has exclusive final jurisdiction over the subject of the effect to be given in each state to the records and judgments of courts of sister states. The case before us is identical in all essential respects with that cited, in which it was held that a judgment in garnishment in the state of Iowa was a bar to an action by the principal defendant against the garnishee to recover the same debt in the state of Kansas where the former resided. Nothing would be gained by repeating here the reasons given by the court in its opinion for reaching such conclusion. The matter is settled beyond criticism or cavil, and we recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

LERTON and OLDFHAM, CC., concur.

Chapman v. Chapman.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

AFFIRMED.

HIRAM T. CHAPMAN V. FLORENCE E. CHAPMAN.

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1905. No. 13,894.

1. **Judicial Record: AUTHENTICATION.** It is indispensable to the authentication of a judicial record of a sister state that it have attached thereto a certificate of the presiding judge that the attestation is "in due form" or "in due form of law."
2. **Husband and Wife: SEPARATION: EVIDENCE.** In case of the separation of husband and wife, it is incumbent upon the spouse first repudiating marital obligations to establish freedom from fault and justification or excuse for such conduct.
3. **Suit for Maintenance: DECREE.** In an action by a wife, not for a divorce of either description authorized by the statute, but simply to compel the husband to provide her an adequate support and maintenance, it is error to render a judgment in her favor for a single sum in gross and award execution therefor.

ERROR to the district court for Cedar county: GUY T. GRAVES, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

W. E. Gantt and J. C. Robinson, for plaintiff in error.

Gurley & Woodrough, contra.

AMES, C.

This is an action by a wife against her husband, not for a divorce from the bonds of matrimony nor from bed and board, but to obtain a decree for maintenance only, which she alleges that the defendant, being a man of large means and ability, has for a term of years failed to provide, he having utterly deserted her. The answer in effect admits the desertion and failure to support, but justifies by averring that some ten years previous to the beginning of this

action the defendant, by the judgment of the district court for Cass county, in North Dakota, obtained a divorce from the bonds of matrimony with the plaintiff, in an action duly pending in said court, in which the plaintiff had entered her appearance, and in which she had been allowed by the court and paid by the defendant certain sums as "suit money" or alimony *pendente lite*. In her reply the plaintiff admits the beginning of the suit in the North Dakota court, but denies that she was ever served with process or ever appeared therein; denies that she was ever paid anything by way of temporary alimony in the action; denies the rendition of a decree of divorce in that action as alleged in the answer; and alleges that neither she nor the defendant has at any time been a resident of the state of North Dakota or of the county of Cass therein, and that the district court of that county never had jurisdiction of her person or of the subject matter of a suit of divorce between herself and her husband. In short, by these and other denials and averments the entire proceeding in the North Dakota court was put in issue as completely as could have been done by a general denial, except that it was admitted that there was some such proceeding or pretended proceeding by which the defendant sought to justify his desertion of the plaintiff and his failure to support her.

To maintain the issues on his part the defendant offered in evidence a copy of the judgment roll in the proceeding in the North Dakota court, which was objected to on the ground that it was not authenticated in the manner provided by law. The defect of which the plaintiff complains is the absence of a certificate by the presiding judge of the court that the attestation to the record by the clerk is "in due form" or "in due form of law," as is required by an act of congress and a statute of this state. Authorities that the absence of such certificate is a fatal defect are too numerous and too familiar to permit a contrary contention, which, indeed, counsel for plaintiff do not in this court attempt to make, but he does argue that the

objection in the court below was so vague and general as to be ineffectual. The objection, as appears by the bill of exceptions, was in the following form: "That the same is not authenticated as required for the authentication of foreign records under the laws of this state or by act of congress in such cases made and provided." We think the language used was sufficiently definite to invite especial examination of the form and language of the certificate of authentication, which, if made, would have disclosed the defect, and that greater precision was not required. The trial court received the document in evidence, but as the objection goes to its competency we feel bound to ignore its presence in the record. We are thus excused from discussing the evidence offered to impeach the proceeding in the North Dakota court for fraud and want of jurisdiction, but may note in passing that it sufficed to satisfy the trial judge of the invalidity of the decree attacked.

The conclusion thus reached dispenses with a consideration of much of the briefs and arguments of counsel for plaintiff in error, but the foremost and principal of his remaining complaints is the assignment that there is no evidence that the plaintiff below is a person of good character and free from fault in her marital relations with the defendant. As showing the validity of this objection counsel cites *Stewart, Marriage and Divorce*, sec. 179, and several judicial decisions by courts of other states to the effect that a wife who is living apart from her husband must, in order to sustain an action of this kind, aver and prove that she herself is free from fault, and that the separation was not due to her own wrong. But we do not think that this rule is intended to impose an unequal burden on the wife or to deprive her of the benefit of the ordinary presumptions of innocence that obtain in favor of one regularly indicted by a grand jury for an alleged offense. There is enough in the record to show, and indeed it is not disputed, that the defendant deserted his wife within a short time after his marriage, and about ten years before the beginning of this action. If he had valid

excuse or justification for such conduct, it is surely incumbent upon him to make known its nature and establish it by proof. Upon the face of the transaction he is himself a wrongdoer, and it appears to us that it would be a glaring injustice both to exonerate him from explaining his desertion and to require the plaintiff to show affirmatively that she has been guilty of no act calculated to provoke it. We do not think that the rule invoked by counsel, or any of the authorities cited by him, sanction such a practice. The case would be quite different if the plaintiff had left the bed and board of the defendant. In such a case there would be no impropriety in calling upon her to prove her own freedom from fault, as well as a justification for her own conduct by that of her husband. In short, the gist of the rule is that whichever spouse has first repudiated the marital obligations is rightly called upon to give a valid reason for so doing.

There was a judgment for the wife for the sum of \$10,000, which the defendant, who prosecutes error, complains of as excessive and as being supported by insufficient evidence. The evidence, in brief, is that he was worth in excess of \$100,000 at the date of desertion; the wife being ignorant of and being unable to procure witnesses having knowledge of the state of his affairs since that time. The defendant offered no evidence on the subject, but complains that that of the plaintiff is so remote as to be incompetent. We do not think so. It was the best obtainable by her concerning a matter within the peculiar, if not exclusive, knowledge of the defendant, and it suffices to raise a presumption, which he had abundant opportunity to rebut if he could do so; the fact that he made no such attempt serves to strengthen the presumption.

We think, however, that the court erred in awarding so large a sum, or, indeed, any sum at all, in gross, for the future support and maintenance of the plaintiff. That practice was sanctioned and the contrary course disapproved by this court in *Cochran v. Cochran*, 42 Neb. 612,

and in *McGeachie v. McGeachie*, 43 Neb. 523, but we think without mature or adequate deliberation. Neither description of divorce authorized by the statute is prayed for in the petition or granted by the court, nor does the plaintiff ask for *separate* maintenance. She prays simply that the defendant be compelled to support her accordingly with his ability and suitably with her station in life, and for aught that appears she is ready and willing to resume marital relations with him at any time he shall express a wish or afford an opportunity for her so to do. The judgment is in form and effect an ordinary judgment at law that the plaintiff have and recover of and from the defendant the sum of \$10,000 and costs of suit, and that execution issue therefor. The defendant is considerably her senior and not improbably will predecease her, but she is not barred of her dower or of her distributive share in his estate in the event she shall survive him; and if, after his payment of the judgment, she should through providence or misfortune again become destitute, he would still remain obligated for her support so long as the marriage relation should subsist, which, on the other hand, might terminate by his death on the day after the payment should be made. We are ignorant of any authority, statutory or other, for the creation for a married woman of a separate estate out of the property of her husband without his consent, and such an act would have a tendency to discourage the resumption of marital relations which it is in the interest of good morals and sound public policy to promote. We think that the judgment of the district court should be reversed and the cause remanded with instructions to receive such additional competent evidence pertinent to the subject of alimony as may be offered by either party, and to award to the plaintiff such sums, to be paid to her periodically by the defendant, as shall appear to be within his ability to pay and be adequate for her suitable maintenance.

It is therefore recommended that the judgment be re-

Webber v. Ingersoll.

versed and the cause remanded, with instructions to proceed in compliance with this opinion.

LUTTON and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded, with instructions to proceed in compliance with this opinion.

REVERSED.

JACOB C. WEBBER, APPELLANT, v. L. H. INGERSOLL, EXECUTOR, ET AL., APPELLEES.

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1905. No. 13,945.

1. **Appeal: ELECTION: REVIEW.** Upon an appeal to this court for a trial *de novo* of the issues tried in the district court, an error of that court in compelling the appellant plaintiff to elect upon which of two causes of action set forth in his petition he would proceed cannot be corrected.
2. **Pleading.** An answer setting up the statute of limitations is not a technical plea of confession and avoidance; whether an answer of a supposed estoppel is so or not depends upon the nature of the matter alleged in the plea.
3. **Evidence examined,** and found to uphold the judgment of the district court.

APPEAL from the district court for Clay county: ED L. ADAMS, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

T. H. Matters, for appellant.

Boslaugh & Moore and *Charles H. Sloan*, contra.

AMES, C.

This action was formerly before this court and disposed of by an opinion by Mr. Commissioner DAY, reported in 3 Neb. (Unof.) 534. The suit was begun to

quiet title to a quarter section of land in the possession of the plaintiff against what he alleged to be a cloud thereon, consisting of a deed purporting to convey the same and executed by John M. Ragan to one John M. Elder, deceased, an ancestor of the defendants. The answer put in issue the title of the plaintiff and alleged that Ragan, at and before the conveyance by him of the land to Elder, was the owner of the same by purchase and conveyance for a valuable consideration from the plaintiff, and that the former mentioned conveyance was also for a valuable consideration and obtained in good faith. The reply alleged that the conveyance by the plaintiff to Ragan was upon certain express and implied trusts of which the ancestor of the defendants had full knowledge at and before the time he obtained his conveyance, and which he became bound to observe and carry out, and from and by means of which and of attending circumstances the grantee became, by result or operation of law, a trustee of the title for the plaintiff. From a judgment in favor of the plaintiff, error was prosecuted to this court, where it was held that the new matter pleaded in the reply was a departure from the cause of action set out in the petition, which, upon timely objection in the trial court, should have been stricken therefrom, but that failure to make such objection and the trial of the action upon the issue thus tendered amounted to a waiver thereof and entitled the matter thus pleaded to be treated as though it had been properly incorporated into the petition, but the judgment was reversed for insufficiency of the evidence for its support.

After the cause was remanded, the plaintiff by leave of court filed an amended petition, setting forth with greater amplitude the cause of action pleaded in the former reply, and for a second cause of action pleading that he had been in adverse possession of the premises in dispute for more than ten years immediately preceding the beginning of the suit. A motion to compel the plaintiff to elect upon which of the two causes of action, claimed to be mutually

inconsistent, he would proceed, was sustained by the court, and the plaintiff chose the first of them. The answer is a general denial, supplemented by the defense of the statute of limitations, and a plea that the plaintiff is estopped from litigating the cause of action upon which he elected to proceed by the fact that it is, as has been adjudged by this court, a departure from the cause of action contained in the original petition. The allegations of the answer were put in issue by a reply, and the action proceeded to a trial, resulting in a judgment for the defendants, from which the plaintiff prosecutes this appeal. Appellant in his brief relies upon three propositions which are propounded by him in his own language as follows: (1) "The court erred in compelling the plaintiff to elect." (2) "The plaintiff is entitled to judgment on the pleadings." (3) "That plaintiff is entitled to judgment on the evidence."

As to the first of these propositions, counsel for appellees object, we think rightfully, that it could have been properly presented only by a petition in error. This court cannot, upon an appeal bringing a cause here for a trial *de novo*, reform the pleadings by introducing issues not tried in the district court, the trial of which would or might require the examination of evidence which neither party was called upon to produce or could have successfully offered in the court below. It is not a solution of the difficulty for the appellant to say, as he does say, that there is enough evidence in the record to maintain the issue of adverse possession in his behalf. Although that assertion be true, appellees were not bound, and might not have been permitted, to introduce evidence in rebuttal, and the only means of correcting the error, if it be one, is a reversal and a new trial, an object which, under the law as it existed when this appeal was taken, was not the office of an appeal to accomplish.

The second proposition is founded upon the contention that the defenses of the statute of limitations and of estoppel are both of them technical pleas of confession and

avoidance, and that, neither of them being sufficient in this case, the allegations of the petition stand confessed without defense and entitle the plaintiff to judgment. But counsel seems in this respect to be afflicted with some confusion of thought. If an answer setting forth the statute of limitations or an estoppel amounted simply to a confession as a pleading, so that the plaintiff would be entitled to a judgment on motion without a reply or evidence, neither defense would ever be available. If either of them is insufficient in this case, it is because of a failure of proof in its support as might be the case with respect to any other issue. Counsel cites no authority for holding that a plea of the statute of limitations is a confession of the alleged cause of action to which it is interposed, and we are quite sure that it has not been hitherto so regarded by the courts or profession in this state. In effect, if not in form, the plea is that the plaintiff ought not to have or maintain his suit, because the facts out of which a cause therefor is alleged to have accrued are not averred to have taken place or did not in fact occur, if at all, within the period of limitation before the action begun. This plea is quite consistent with the contention that they did not take place at all, and the two issues may be, and usually are, tried as one. If the plaintiff fails to prove the existence of the requisite facts, he, of course, fails to recover; but if he proves them, and it appears that their occurrence was too remote in time, he also fails. As to estoppels, there are several varieties of them. An estoppel, for instance, may consist of a waiver by which the plaintiff has forgone or abandoned a previously subsisting and valid cause of action; and a plea of such an estoppel of necessity confesses the existence of the facts, the effect of which, it is alleged, was afterwards waived. But there are other estoppels which arise out of the very transaction and circumstances upon which the plaintiff relies as affording him a ground of recovery, and a plea of such an estoppel, so far from confessing and seeking to avoid, amounts to a practical denial of the plaintiff's cause of

action. And there is still another kind, in which it is averred that the conduct of the plaintiff since the alleged accrual of his supposed cause of action has been such as to lead the defendant to believe that it did not exist or would not be asserted, and that the latter has conducted his affairs accordingly, and that therefore whether the plaintiff has a good cause of action arising out of the facts alleged by him or whether he has not is immaterial, because he ought not in good conscience to be permitted to assert it. It is of such a plea that it is correctly said in Stephens, Pleading (2d ed.), sec. 166, that it "is neither by way of traverse nor confession and avoidance, viz., a pleading that, waiving any question on the fact, relies merely on the estoppel; and, after stating the previous act, allegation or denial of the opposite party, prays judgment if he *shall be received or admitted* to aver contrary to what he before did or said." In this last case, if the matter alleged in estoppel is sustained by sufficient proof, there is no occasion to inquire whether the averments of the plaintiff are true or false, but if the defendant fails in his proof, the plaintiff must still establish the truth of his averments, unless it is admitted otherwise by the plea of estoppel. Now, the estoppel pleaded by the appellees in this case is analogous to, if not strictly of, the last mentioned kind, and prays the judgment of the court whether the plaintiff ought to be "received or admitted," in the language of Mr. Stephens, to "aver" or assert the cause of action alleged in his amended petition, after having previously set up and litigated a different and inconsistent cause of action in his original petition. For the purposes of this discussion it may be assumed, but is not decided, that the matter thus pleaded, and admittedly true, is ineffectual as an estoppel, because the former trial was actually of the same issue, tendered in the former reply.

We thus arrive at a consideration of appellant's third proposition, which is that he is entitled to a judgment on the evidence. The evidence establishes, as we think without serious conflict, that the plaintiff was the owner of

the land in controversy, subject to a mortgage thereon, upon which there had been a decree of foreclosure and sale in the federal court, and that a marshal's sale pursuant to the decree had been had, but not confirmed; that Ragan bought the title and received a conveyance from the plaintiff for a valuable consideration for his own use and benefit, and unaffected by any trust, express or implied, and not under circumstances from which a trust would result by operation of law, but intending to make a profit by its subsequent sale at a larger price; that after he obtained his title he redeemed the land from the marshal's sale before confirmation and with his own funds; that afterwards Ragan sold and conveyed the premises to the ancestor of the defendants for an actual and adequate consideration, who paid for the same, in part with funds previously belonging to him, and in part with proceeds of a loan secured by a mortgage executed upon the same and other lands, and that there was no agreement, express or implied, that the grantee should hold the lands in trust for the plaintiff, or as security for the purchase money, or any part of it, paid to Ragan. This version of the transaction is testified to by Ragan, who is a disinterested witness, without equivocation, and is corroborated by that of both the defendants. It is not directly or pointedly disputed either by the plaintiff or by any witness in his behalf, and the nature of his occupancy of the premises since that time is consistent with the testimony of the defendants, who are his nephews, that it was with their permission and as a means of providing him with a livelihood in his declining years. Without reciting the evidence, which we have examined with care, in further detail, it may suffice to say that we are satisfied that it fully supports the judgment of the district court, which we recommend be affirmed.

LETTON and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing

Soehner v. Grand Lodge, Order of Sons of Herman.

opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

AFFIRMED.

**CHRISTINE SOEHNER V. GRAND LODGE, ORDER OF SONS OF
HERMAN.**

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1905. No. 13,789.

1. **Insurance: MUTUAL BENEFIT ASSOCIATION.** A certificate of a mutual association will be treated as a contract of insurance between the member and the association.
2. **Payment of Assessments.** Where by the constitution and by-laws of a fraternal benefit society it is made the duty of the members of such society to pay their assessments and dues to the secretary of the local lodge to which they belong, such secretary in receiving such dues and assessments acts as the agent of the grand lodge of the order which issues the certificate.
3. **Forfeiture: WAIVER.** If, with knowledge of the facts by reason whereof it is entitled to claim a forfeiture, the insurer continues to treat the policy as in force, or does any act inconsistent with an intention to insist upon the forfeiture, the forfeiture is waived. *Hunt v. State Ins. Co.*, 66 Neb. 125, followed and approved.
4. **Conditions in a policy of insurance limiting or avoiding liability** are strictly construed against the insurer and liberally in favor of the assured.
5. **Directing Verdict.** *Held*, under the facts and circumstances shown by the record in this case, that it was error to direct a verdict for the defendant.

ERROR to the district court for Cedar county: GUY T. GRAVES, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

John Bridenbaugh, for plaintiff in error.

B. Ready and *J. C. Robinson*, *contra.*

OLDHAM, C.

This was an action on a fraternal benefit certificate issued by the grand lodge of the Order of the Sons of

Herman to Jacob Soehner on his becoming a member of the fraternal insurance society and the payment by him of the dues required by the society on the 21st day of February, 1899. By this certificate the association, on proof of the death of Jacob Soehner, promised to pay to plaintiff, the wife of Jacob Soehner and the beneficiary named in the certificate, the sum of \$500. The petition alleged the issuance of the certificate and the full compliance by Jacob Soehner with the constitution, by-laws and rules of the order, and payment in full of all dues and assessments required by the rules of the association and by the terms of such certificate and policy of insurance; and that on the 25th day of September, 1902, the said Jacob Soehner died from the effects of having been struck and run over by a railroad train; and that notice of the death was properly communicated to the defendant, and defendant refused and failed to pay the amount due plaintiff on the benefit certificate. The answer admitted that the defendant was a fraternal benefit society organized under the laws of the state of Nebraska, and that plaintiff was the wife of Jacob Soehner, and that defendant had issued the certificate alleged on in the petition. The answer then sets up the application of Jacob Soehner for membership in the order, the material provision to the questions now in issue, which was that "I further agree that I will comply with all the laws, rules and regulations now in force and those which may hereafter be adopted, and this fact shall be the specific reason which will entitle me to the insurance and all other provisions and benefits of the order." The answer then alleges that at the time of the death of deceased, and for more than two years prior thereto, the laws of the order governing the payment of dues were as follows:

"Art. 17. Par. 1. Members who have failed to pay their lodge dues, insurance assessments and fines within 30 days, figured from the date of making the assessment, shall be suspended *ipso facto*, and shall lose all rights to

which they would otherwise be entitled, and it shall need no special order or notice on the part of the order.

"Par. 2. Such suspended members, whether such suspension is on account of failure to pay lodge dues or insurance assessments, shall lose all rights to which they would otherwise be entitled, and the certificate of insurance shall be null and void. * * *

"Par. 3. A suspended member can be reinstated if he pays all arrearages within 30 days from date of suspension. He can also be reinstated if he makes written application for reinstatement to the local lodge within three months of the date of suspension and pays all lodge dues, insurance assessments and fines. To be reinstated at this time, however, requires a two-thirds of all the votes cast by ballot in favor of such reinstatement at a meeting of the local lodge.

"Par. 4. Former members who have been suspended more than three months can be reinstated to their rights only when they follow the same proceedings as for the taking in of new members, yet there must be an examination by a physician. In such cases, however, the initiation can be dispensed with, provided he applies within six months from the date of the suspension."

The answer further alleges that assessment numbered 4, payable during the month of April, had not been paid by the deceased or anyone for him, nor have assessments numbered 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 of the series of 1902 been paid, the same being the assessments for the months of May, June, July, August and September; that according to the laws and obligations above set forth Jacob Soehner thereby forfeited his certificate of insurance, and such forfeiture was entered on the records of the grand lodge of said Order of Sons of Herman by the secretary thereof on the 1st day of May, 1902; and that the deceased had failed to make any application or a request for reinstatement, and never has been reinstated, and this defendant is relieved of said lodge certificate of insurance. A reply was filed to this answer in the nature of a general denial;

and on issues thus joined there was a trial to a jury, and at the close of the testimony offered by both plaintiff and defendant the court directed a verdict for defendant and entered judgment on such verdict, and to reverse this judgment the plaintiff brings error to this court.

In addition to the by-laws set up in the answer of defendant the following provisions of the benefit certificate were offered and admitted. "Art. 2. Membership. (1) All the members of all the lodges of the Order of the Sons of Herman in the state of Nebraska are firmly bound in the case of death of a brother who is entitled according to the constitution and by-laws to the sum of \$500 to pay the same to such person or persons as was designated in his application by the deceased member as the recipient of the insurance money. (2) The assessment for the making up of this sum shall be made from all the members of the order in the state in the following manner: Members from 18 to 30 years of age, 30 cents; 30 to 38 years of age 40 cents; 38 to 40 years of age 50 cents. (3) By the first of each month each member of the order shall pay to the secretary of his lodge his assessment to the mortuary fund, which assessments are to be sent not later and within the 10th of the same month by him to the grand secretary," etc., "and the grand secretary is required to forward receipt, which receipt must be laid before the lodge at the next meeting. * * * (5) If a member has not paid his assessments 30 days after the calling in day, he shall be suspended for 30 days; if he pays within this time, he is reinstated into his rights; if he does not pay, he is to be stricken off the membership list. (6) If the mortuary fund amounts to more than \$3,000 through the monthly assessments of the members, the executive committee is empowered to postpone the next following assessment for an indefinite time."

The by-laws pleaded in defendant's answer were adopted after the benefit certificate was issued. The last provisions set out were in force and embodied in the certificate at the time it was issued. The material evidence

introduced at the trial was that on the 13th of September Jacob Soehner paid to the local secretary of the lodge, Lewis Ottenheimer, the assessments for April, May, June, July, August and September, and arrears of dues for the third and fourth quarters, and his *per capita* tax, and received a receipt in full of such payments from the local secretary; that on the 25th day of September he was killed in a railroad accident, and that notice of his death was properly communicated to the defendant lodge. The evidence showed that the local secretary had repeatedly requested Soehner to pay his arrearages to the lodge. The local secretary testified on behalf of defendant, and over defendant's objection, that, when he received the money from Soehner and gave him a receipt in full for his arrearages, he told Soehner that he had been out so long that he was scratched off, but that he would write to the grand secretary and see if he would accept the money, and, if he did, it would be all right. The record of the grand secretary was introduced, which showed after the name of Soehner, on date of July 1, a German word, which translated meant "scratched off." There is no evidence, however, except the entry itself, as to when this word was written after the name of Soehner. When the local secretary received the money, he did not write to the grand secretary, as he said he had agreed to do, until after the death of Soehner. He then wrote to the grand secretary, without inclosing the money, and the grand secretary declined to receive it, and so far as the evidence shows the local secretary still has the money in his possession. This is all the evidence material to the issues contained in the record.

We have set out the material conditions of the policy, the application and the constitution and by-laws of the of the association, because they, when not in conflict with the statute authorizing such organization, constitute the contract between the member and the association. While in the early days of the existence of fraternal benefit associations a different view of their relation to their mem-

bers was entertained by some of the courts of the United States, the very strong trend of modern decisions is to treat a benefit certificate as a contract of insurance between the member and the association, and this modern doctrine has received the approval of this court in the very recent case of *Modern Woodmen of America v. Colman*, 64 Neb. 162. It is not the policy of the law to favor forfeitures, and it is the tendency of courts to regard a provision in the constitution or by-laws of a benefit society that a member not remitting his assessments within a specified time shall forfeit his claim to membership as not a self-executing provision, but one which requires affirmative action of the association by declaring a forfeiture. *Northwestern Traveling Men's Ass'n v. Schauss*, 148 Ill. 304. In fact, the strong tendency is to construe the by-laws and constitution liberally in favor of the assured.

In the instant case it is contended on the part of the insurance company that Jacob Soehner was suspended by the affirmative action of the grand lodge on the 1st day of July for his arrearages. But there is no evidence that the local lodge was ever notified of this suspension, if it were actually made at that time. Section 3 of the by-laws pleaded in defendant's answer provides that the suspended member can be reinstated by paying all arrearages 30 days from date of suspension. Under this section of the by-laws all he has to do is to pay his arrearages. It is also provided that after his suspension for three months he may by a two-thirds vote of the society be reinstated on payment of arrearages. Now, assuming that Soehner was suspended on July 1 by the grand lodge, he had not been out of the order three months at the time he paid all arrears to the local secretary. While there is no specific provision for reinstatement between 30 days and three months, yet, fairly and liberally construed, any member of this order in arrears may within three months of his suspension be reinstated by paying his arrearages, when the money is accepted without a vote of the lodge.

By section 3 of the constitution and the conditions of the policy it is made the duty of each member to pay his dues and assessments to the local secretary of his lodge, and the duty of the secretary to remit to the grand secretary, and the grand secretary to return a receipt to be read in lodge. Under such a provision as this the local secretary becomes the agent of the grand lodge in receiving dues and assessments from its members. In *Supreme Tribe of Ben Hur v. Hall*, 24 Ind. App. 316, it is said:

"The duties of an officer determine the question of his agency, and not what he may be called. He is the agent of the supreme tribe for doing what its by-laws require him to do as between the members of the order and the supreme tribe"—citing *Supreme Council of the Catholic Benevolent Legion v. Boyle*, 10 Ind. App. 301; *Germania Life Ins. Co. v. Lunkenheimer*, 127 Ind. 536.

If, then, the local secretary of the lodge was the agent of the grand lodge in the receipt of dues and assessments from the members of the local organization, the question arises as to whether the receipt by him to Jacob Soehner for all past due assessments and *per capita* tax amounted to a waiver of the conditions of the by-laws providing for the suspension of a member in arrears more than 30 days. In the very recent case of *Hunt v. State Ins. Co.*, 66 Neb. 125, it was said by this court: "If with knowledge of the facts by reason whereof it is entitled to claim a forfeiture, the insurer continues to treat the policy as in force, or does any act inconsistent with an intention to insist upon the forfeiture, the forfeiture is waived"—citing in support of this proposition, *Hughes v. Insurance Company of North America*, 40 Neb. 626; *Rochester Loan & Banking Co. v. Liberty Ins. Co.*, 44 Neb. 537; *Home Fire Ins. Co. v. Kuhlman*, 58 Neb. 488.

In Richards, Insurance, sec. 76, the author says: "Universally it is held that the acceptance of an assessment or premium by the home office is a waiver by the company of all former grounds of forfeiture known by it." To the same effect is the holding in *Supreme Tribe of*

Soehner v. Grand Lodge, Order of Sons of Herman.

Ben Hur v. Hall, supra, and *Masonic Mutual Benefit Ass'n v. Beck*, 77 Ind. 203, 40 Am. Rep. 295.

In *Queen Ins. Co. v. Young*, 86 Ala. 424, 5 So. 116, it is said: "Conditions in a policy of insurance, limiting or avoiding liability, are strictly construed against the insurer, and liberally in favor of the assured. Though a waiver may be in the nature of an estoppel, and maintained on similar principles, they are not convertible terms. The courts, not favoring forfeitures, are usually inclined to take hold of any circumstances which indicate an election to waive a forfeiture. * * * If the company, after knowledge of the breach, enters into negotiations or transactions with the assured, which recognize and treat the policy as still in force, or induces the assured to incur trouble or expense, it will be regarded as having waived the right to claim the forfeiture"—citing *Titus v. Glen Falls Ins. Co.*, 81 N. Y. 410.

A fraternal benefit association, as defined by section 91, chapter 43, Compiled Statutes 1903 (Ann. St. 6483), is "a corporation, society or voluntary association, formed or organized and carried on for the sole benefit of its members and their beneficiaries, and not for profit." Section 92 requires such association to make provision for the payment of benefits in case of death, and permits provisions to be made for the payment of benefits in case of sickness, etc. Section 93 provides that the funds from which benefits shall be paid and the expenses of the society defrayed shall be derived from beneficiary calls, assessments or dues collected from the members. Under the by-laws and constitution of the Sons of Herman, as before set out in this opinion, assessments for the mortuary fund were made monthly, according to the age at which the member was admitted, until the fund reached a certain stipulated amount, when the calls might be suspended by the grand secretary. In other words, both under the statute and the by-laws of the order these assessments were levied under the direction of the grand lodge. While there is some question interposed about the legality of

these assessments, yet this question we think does not arise and cannot be considered under the pleadings filed and issues raised in this case. Plaintiff tried the case on the theory that the assessments had been legally levied and had been paid by her husband. Defendant tried it on the theory that all these assessments from April to September, inclusive, had been legally levied, and that Jacob Soehner was in default for nonpayment of each one and all of them. Then the question arises whether or not the action of the lodge in assessing the deceased member Soehner for the months of August and September is consistent with its theory that he was suspended in July. In *Stylow v. Wisconsin Odd Fellows Mutual Life Ins. Co.*, 64 Wis. 224, it is said by the supreme court of Wisconsin:

"Every time the company makes an assessment against the assured after he has failed to pay a previous assessment within the time prescribed by the rules, it waives the forfeiture of the policy for such failure to pay and admits him to be a member of the company notwithstanding such failure."

It is urged by counsel for defendant in error that under the rule laid down by this court in *Adams v. Grand Lodge A. O. U. W.*, 66 Neb. 389, the receipt of the money by the local secretary was not sufficient to show a waiver of other conditions for the reinstatement of a member, especially when the receipt is accompanied by an express requirement of compliance with other conditions. In the case just cited, the member of the order had been suspended and so entered on the books of the local as well as the grand lodge. When he applied for reinstatement, the rules of the order required, in addition to the payment of dues, the production of a health certificate from a physician. The finance officer notified him of this condition, and furnished him a health certificate to return properly executed by a physician. This the member neglected to do. The evidence in this case also shows that the member himself was fully familiar with the rules, and

had been suspended and reinstated under these rules before this time. In the case at bar, there was no requirement under the rules for a health certificate, or anything, as we have pointed out, but the payment of arrearages. This the member did. So that the only question in this case, if there be one at all, is whether or not the alleged conversation between him and the local secretary was sufficient to inform the member that the local secretary would hold the money subject to the action of the grand secretary. No condition was named in the receipt executed and delivered by the local secretary, and no explanation is made as to why the assessments were charged against the deceased member, when the grand secretary was insisting that he had been "struck off." It seems to us that under this peculiar condition the question of the understanding between deceased and the local secretary at the time the payment was made was at least one of fact for the jury. In *Thibert v. Supreme Lodge Knights of Honor*, 78 Minn. 448, 81 N. W. 220, under conditions very similar to those in the case at bar, it was said by Collins, J., in rendering the opinion: "But, in any event, the question whether the reporter gave the notice testified to was for the jury; taking into consideration, as we must, that Thibert, who alone could deny the conversation, was dead, and could not be heard."

We are therefore of opinion that the district court erred in directing a verdict for the defendant, and we recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

AMES, C., concurs.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

REVERSED.

WILLIAM RODENBROCK V. RAIMOND GRESS.

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1905. No. 13,886.

Real Estate Agent: ACTION FOR SERVICES. Services as a real estate broker, rendered for the owner of the land without a written contract, cannot be recovered for as such on a *quantum meruit*. *Blair v. Austin*, 71 Neb. 401, followed and approved.

ERROR to the district court for Otoe county: PAUL JESSEN, JUDGE. Affirmed.

W. H. Pitzer, for plaintiff in error.

James W. Eaton, John V. Morgan and John C. Watson,
contra.

OLDHAM, C.

This was a suit to recover the value of services alleged to have been rendered by plaintiff in the court below as a real estate agent and broker in negotiating the sale of certain lands owned by the defendant in Otoe county, Nebraska. Defendant demurred to the petition in the district court. The demurrer was sustained and, plaintiff refusing to further plead, the petition was dismissed. To reverse the judgment of the district court in dismissing the petition, plaintiff brings error to this court.

The petition, after showing that on and prior to January 1, 1902, the defendant was the owner of the lands in controversy, describing them, alleges that in the month of October, 1902, the defendant, being desirous of selling said lands, requested the plaintiff to sell them for the defendant for \$12,000, and promised to pay plaintiff for his services if plaintiff succeeded in making a sale of the lands on said terms. The petition then alleges that, in reliance on the request and agreement of the defendant, plaintiff devoted a large amount of time and made continued efforts toward effecting a sale of said lands, and that he did effect a contract of sale thereof to one John Bando for the price of \$12,000, and that thereafter the defendant and

Rosen: rock v. Green

John Bando completed the transfer of the lands, and defendant executed his deed to Bando, conveying the lands, and received the sum of \$12,000, the purchase price thereof, and that the sale was effected entirely through the efforts of the plaintiff, and was highly advantageous to the defendant. Plaintiff further alleged that the usual compensation for similar services in effecting sales of real estate is a commission of 5 per cent. on the first \$1,000 and 2½ per cent. on the sale price exceeding \$1,000, and that this was well known to the defendant; that since the sale has been completed defendant promised to pay the plaintiff this commission, and that no part thereof has been paid. The petition prays for judgment for the amount of the commission at the rate stated.

It will be noticed that there is no allegation in the petition for the recovery of money expended in the negotiation of the sale at defendant's request and for his benefit, nor is there any allegation for the reasonable value of services performed at defendant's request and for his benefit; but, on the contrary, the petition alleges on the reasonable value of commissions earned as a real estate agent and broker in effecting the sale of lands. This brings the case squarely within the doctrine announced by this court in *Blair v. Austin*, 71 Neb. 401, in which it was held that "services as a real estate broker rendered for the owner of the land, without a written contract, cannot be recovered for, as such, upon a *quantum meruit*." Section 74, chapter 73, Compiled Statutes 1903 (Ann. St. 10258), has recently been construed in all its phases by this court in *Spence v. Apley*, 4 Neb. (Unof.) 358; *Baker v. Gillan*, 68 Neb. 368; *Danielson v. Goebel*, 71 Neb. 301, and *Blair v. Austin*, *supra*. It therefore needs no further discussion in this opinion.

The judgment of the district court in sustaining the demurrer was in full harmony with all these decisions, and we recommend that such judgment be affirmed.

AMES and LETTON, CC., concur.

Morris v. Linton.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

JOHN MORRIS, APPELLEE, v. PHOEBE R. E. E. LINTON ET AL.,
APPELLANTS.

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1905. No. 13,901.

1. **Depositions: ADMISSIBILITY.** In the case of alienation of lands *pendente lite*, depositions of witnesses taken after the alienation and before the alienee becomes a party to the cause may be used against the alienee the same as they might have been used against the party under whom he claims.
2. **Mortgage: VALIDITY.** Where a mortgage is given to secure a *bona fide* indebtedness contracted before the execution of a note, the mortgage will be held valid as security for the debt, although the note itself may be invalid for want of a revenue stamp.
3. **Dismissal: EFFECT.** The dismissal of a bill without prejudice does not conclude the parties thereto.
4. **Trusts: EXECUTED AND EXECUTORY.** The distinction between trusts executed and executory is this: A trust executed is where the party has given complete directions for settling his estate, with perfect limitations; an executory trust is where the directions are incomplete, and are rather minutes or instructions for the settlement.
5. **The law of the situs governs** in regard to all rights, interests and titles in and to immovable property.

APPEAL from and error to the district court for Douglas county: ABRAHAM L. SUTTON, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

John O. Yeiser, for appellants.

E. W. Simeral, contra.

OLDHAM, C.

The original petition in this case was filed on May 24, 1898, in the district court for Douglas county, praying for

Morris v. Linton.

the foreclosure of a real estate mortgage executed by the defendant, Phoebe R. E. E. Linton, to John Morris, mortgagee. The mortgage was given to secure advancements of money made by the mortgagee for the separate use of Mrs. Linton, and was purported to be evidenced by a note executed by her to the mortgagee at the time the mortgage was given. It was a Nebraska form of mortgage, describing the mortgagor as "Phoebe Rebecca Elizabeth Elwina Linton of Omaha, Nebraska, United States of America, wife of Adolphus Frederick Linton." It was acknowledged on January 14, 1896, in London, England, before the deputy consul general of the United States of America, under seal of his office, in the ordinary form of acknowledgment in this state. It is stipulated, however, that Mrs. Linton was a subject of Great Britain at the time the note and mortgage were executed. When the suit was instituted, all parties appearing to have any claims or interest in the mortgaged premises were made parties defendant. The cause of action was continued from time to time, and on August 28, 1901, upon notice to all the parties defendant, depositions were taken by the plaintiff in London, England, and these depositions were filed in the district court for Douglas county, September 17, 1901. On May 20, 1901, there had been filed for record with the register of deeds of Douglas county a purported conveyance in trust of the lands in controversy from Mrs. Linton to a trustee for the benefit of her two minor children, Charles and Fryda Linton. This is claimed to have been done in compliance with an antenuptial contract with her husband. Thereafter, on November 4, 1901, plaintiff filed an amended and supplemental petition, making these minor children and the trustee named in the purported deed parties defendant. A guardian *ad litem* was appointed for the minor defendants, and after many delays the issues were finally settled. On April 9, 1904, a decree was entered in favor of the mortgagee for the sum of \$44,679.20, and a foreclosure of the mortgaged premises was directed. To reverse this decree the guardian

ad litem of the minor defendants brings error to this court, and defendants Phoebe R. E. Linton and her husband bring the cause here by appeal. The two causes of action were consolidated and will be treated together. In the error proceedings by the guardian *ad litem* of the minor defendants it is first urged that the court erred in overruling the motion of the guardian *ad litem* to suppress the depositions taken in London on August 28, 1901, as against the rights of the minor defendants. No motion to suppress these depositions was made until May 2, 1902, and the motion to suppress was not called for action until April 8, 1904, the day the trial began. The court overruled the motion, and the trial proceeded without further objections from the defendants. Without determining whether or not these minors were necessary parties to the suit, it is sufficient to say that they came into the suit *pendente lite* under a conveyance executed long after the suit had been instituted. It is the rule that, where an alienation of property is made *pendente lite*, the alienee is bound by the proceedings in the suit after the alienation and before the alienee becomes a party to it. Depositions of witnesses taken after the alienation and before the alienee becomes a party may be used against the alienee, as they might have been used against the party under whom he claims. 2 Barbour, Chancery Practice (1st ed.) *79; *Lange v. Braynard*, 104 Cal. 156, 37 Pac. 868.

It is next urged that the court erred in admitting in evidence the note executed by Mrs. Linton to the mortgagee, because such note does not appear to be stamped, as required by the revenue laws of England, where the note was executed, and that, consequently, the mortgage which secured the note was void. In the first place, as the trial was to the court and not to a jury, it was not error to admit the note in evidence in the first instance, even if unstamped. The only error that could be predicated would be the action of the trial court in rendering judgment on such improper testimony. The court, after admitting the note, refused to render judgment on it, and only found for

the plaintiff for such sums of money as were shown without dispute to have been furnished Mrs. Linton for the benefit of her separate estate. The note was given for \$55,454, but the evidence showed that part of this consideration was a debt of the husband, Adolphus Frederick Linton, and no recovery was allowed for this part of the obligation. It is a well settled proposition that, where the original consideration is valid and is contracted prior to the execution of the note, a mortgage given to secure the debt will be valid, although the note purporting to evidence the debt is invalid for want of a revenue stamp. 1 Jones, Mortgages (3d ed.), 353; *Wilson v. Carey*, 40 Vt. 179; *Brown v. Watts*, 1 Taunt. (Eng.) 353; *Sutton v. Toomer*, 7 B. & C. (Eng.) 416.

The sufficiency of the evidence to sustain the decree is challenged in both the error and the appellate proceedings. The facts underlying the controversy are that in 1878 Phoebe R. E. E. Finley, a prospective American heiress, then a minor of the age of 16 years, whose father resided in the state of Pennsylvania, was married in Paris, France, by the English consul to Adolphus Frederick Linton of London, England, who appears to have been a profligate bankrupt. Before the marriage the following antenuptial agreement was entered into by the intended husband and wife: "This is an agreement made on the 9th day of December, Anno Domini 1878, between Adolphus Frederick Linton, Esq., bachelor, of 18 Gilbert St., Grosvenor Square, Middlesex, on the one part, and Rebecca Elizabeth Phoebe Elwina Finley, on the other part, in pursuance of a marriage which is proposed to take place between said parties. It is agreed that all the moneys and property that the said intended wife may become or is now in possession of or that she may at any future time become entitled to, shall be free from the debts, control and engagements of the said intended husband, and settled upon herself for her sole and separate use, and be divided amongst the children of the said intended marriage in such shares as the said intended hus-

band and wife may appoint, but subject, nevertheless, to the said husband taking a vested life interest in any such money or property as above mentioned, in the event of his surviving the said intended wife. And it is further agreed between the said parties that a formal deed of settlement shall be drawn up embodying, in effect, the said agreement as soon as conveniently possible after said marriage. (Signed.) Phœbe Rebecca Elizabeth Elwina Finley. (Signed.) Adolphus Frederick Linton. Witness: R. Lancaster Johnson." At the time this agreement was entered into, Mrs. Linton was the heir expectant of her maternal grandfather, James E. Brown, a resident of Pennsylvania. In 1880, the grandfather died, leaving a valuable estate, which, in 1890, was conveyed in trust to Colonel John B. Finley, father of Mrs. Linton, for her sole benefit. This estate was held in trust by Colonel Finley until 1894, when, on September 28 of that year, he conveyed the lands now in controversy and other lands to Mrs. Linton. This conveyance was properly filed for record with the register of deeds of Douglas county. About two years later the mortgage in controversy was given. On November 15, 1892, Mrs. Linton brought an action in the English chancery court against her husband and his trustee in bankruptcy for specific performance of the antenuptial agreement above set out. It is fair to say that the suit appears to have been brought with the full knowledge and probably at the suggestion of plaintiff, John Morris. The suit, however, was dismissed without prejudice by the plaintiff, October 30, 1893.

It is now contended by counsel for the appellants and plaintiffs in error that the institution of this suit was a ratification of the antenuptial agreement entered into while Mrs. Linton was a minor. If we should regard the institution of the suit as a ratification of the contract, we would be compelled likewise to regard the dismissal of the cause by her as a revocation. The true rule, however, is that the dismissal of a bill without prejudice does not conclude the parties thereto, and they are at liberty to

bring another bill upon the same subject matter. *House v. Mullen*, 22 Wall. (U. S.) 42; *Bank of Maywood v. Estate of McAllister*, 56 Neb. 188. Hence, the institution and dismissal of this suit amounted to neither a ratification nor a revocation of the contract. From the terms of the above agreement it is plainly an executory rather than an executed contract. It shows on its face that its purpose was to protect the expected inheritance of the wife from the debts and liabilities of the bankrupt husband, because, at the time the contract was entered into, under the laws of England, where the parties intended to reside, the personal property of the wife, when reduced to possession, passed to the husband. Consequently, the husband was to have a life estate in the property if he survived the wife; but all the property to be received by her was settled on herself for her sole and separate use, to be divided among the children of the intended marriage in such shares as the husband and wife might subsequently agree upon; and it was further agreed that a formal deed of settlement should be drawn up to effect this purpose as soon as conveniently possible after the marriage.

The contention of the plaintiffs in error is that the minor defendants take the fee of the land in dispute as purchasers under this antenuptial settlement, and that the mortgage was taken by the mortgagee with full knowledge of their rights under this agreement. "The distinction between trusts executed and executory is this: a trust executed is where the party has given complete directions for settling his estate, with perfect limitations; an executory trust, where the directions are incomplete, and are rather minutes, or instructions for the settlement." *Neves v. Scott*, 9 How. (U. S.) 196, 211; *McCartney v. Ridgway*, 160 Ill. 129. The action anticipated by this agreement for carrying it into effect was the execution of a formal deed for that purpose. This was never made until 1901, or five years after the mortgage had been executed. At the time the agreement was entered into, Mrs. Linton had not yet come into possession of her estate, and

the ancestor from whom she received it was still alive. In this court, in the case of *Kocher v. Cornell*, 59 Neb. 315, after a very careful review of the authorities, we held that a married woman cannot contract with reference to her subsequently acquired property. Now, at the time the contract was made, it is conceded that Mrs. Linton was a minor, and that the contract to be binding upon her must have been affirmed after she arrived at maturity, which was long after she had become a married woman.

But it is contended by counsel for the Lintons that the contract, the mortgage and the note are all governed by the laws of Great Britain, the place where the contract was entered into, and not by the laws of the state of Nebraska, the *situs* of the real estate. It is said authoritatively by the learned Judge Story, in his *Conflict of Laws*, sec. 428, that the law of the *situs* shall exclusively govern in regard to all rights, interests and titles in and to immovable property. See also *Richardson v. De Giverville*, 107 Mo. 422, 17 S. W. 974. It follows therefore that the execution of the mortgage and the contract under which the minors claim title to the real estate must be determined by the laws of this state, and not by the laws of England. As already set forth in the opinion, the mortgage itself was a Nebraska form, and was executed in conformity with our statutes. But even if the acknowledgment had been informal as between the parties, the mortgage would have been good, as held by this court in *Linton v. Cooper*, 53 Neb. 400, and in *Morris v. Linton*, 61 Neb. 537.

We therefore conclude that the antenuptial agreement relied upon is no sufficient defense against plaintiff's mortgage, and recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and LINTON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

ALLEN W. FIELD ET AL. V. LINCOLN TRACTION COMPANY
ET AL.

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1905. No. 13,906.

Taxation: BOARD OF EQUALIZATION: DISCRETION. The sound discretion reposed in the board of equalization in hearing complaints on the valuation of property for assessment under the revenue law in force in 1902 will not be disturbed by this court, unless so manifestly wrong that reasonable minds could not differ thereon.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county:
EDWARD P. HOLMES, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

Allen W. Field and Tibbets & Anderson, for plaintiffs
in error.

Clark & Allen and J. L. Caldwell, contra.

OLDHAM, C.

This cause is a proceeding in error from the action of the board of county commissioners of Lancaster county sitting as a board of equalization on the valuation of property of the Lincoln Traction Company, a corporation, for the year 1902. The plaintiff in error filed a protest and objection to the assessment as returned by the assessor. The protest was heard and evidence taken in this and other similar cases before the county board sitting as a board of equalization, and on such hearing the value of the property for taxation was fixed by the board at \$50,000. Error was prosecuted from this finding to the district court, where the action of the board was affirmed, and to reverse this judgment of the district court error is brought to this court.

The only contention urged in the brief of the plaintiff in error is that, under the testimony taken before the board of equalization, it is grossly inadequate to assess the property of the defendant traction company at \$50,000. The evidence was taken in a very informal manner before the

Field v. Nebraska Telephone Co.

board of equalization, as is generally the case in proceedings of this nature before such boards. Under the rules governing the admission and exclusion of testimony in courts of record, little of the evidence offered would have been received. The assessment was made under the revenue law in force in 1902, which has been superseded by the enactment of 1903, which, it is hoped, will prove much more effective in distributing the burdens of taxation in an equitable manner on all classes of property within the commonwealth. Under the law as it existed in 1902 it was the peculiar province of the board of equalization, in its administrative capacity, to hear and determine complaints of improper valuation made by the local assessors, and, unless it is made to appear that the judgment of the board in fixing the valuation on such complaints was so clearly wrong that reasonable minds could not differ thereon, the sound discretion reposed in the board should not be disturbed by a reviewing court. There is no evidence in the record before us to say that the judgment in the case at bar was erroneous in this sense.

We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and LETTON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

ALLEN W. FIELD ET AL. V. NEBRASKA TELEPHONE COMPANY ET AL.

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1905. No. 13,907.

Taxation: BOARD OF EQUALIZATION: APPEAL: BILL OF EXCEPTIONS.

Under section 311 of the code, a bill of exceptions of the proceedings had before a county board of equalization may be settled and

Field v. Nebraska Telephone Co.

approved by the presiding officer of such board; but the general provisions of this section, limiting the time in which the bill may be allowed and providing for notice on the adverse party, must be complied with.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: EDWARD P. HOLMES, JUDGE. Affirmed.

A. W. Field and Tibbets & Anderson, for plaintiffs in error.

W. W. Morsman and Halleck F. Rose, *contra*.

OLDHAM, C.

The plaintiffs in this cause of action, as taxpayers of Lancaster county, Nebraska, filed a complaint with the board of equalization of said county, objecting to the assessment for taxes for the year 1902 of the Nebraska Telephone Company as being too low. A hearing was had before the board, evidence taken, and a final judgment rendered by the board fixing the valuation of the company at \$20,000. The complainants excepted to the judgment of the board, prepared a bill of exceptions, had the same settled and certified to by the chairman of the board, and filed a petition in error with the bill in the district court for Lancaster county. On motion of the defendants, the bill of exceptions was quashed by the district court, and the judgment of the board of equalization was affirmed, and to reverse this judgment plaintiffs bring error to this court.

In the brief filed by the plaintiffs in error, it is said: "If the bill of exceptions was properly quashed, then complainants are in no position to attack the action of the board of equalization; if not properly quashed, then the cause should be remanded to the district court for action on the merits of the case." With reference to the settlement of the bill of exceptions, it appears from the record that, before the adjournment of the board of equalization on July 10, 1902, an order was made giving the

complainants 60 days in which to settle a bill of exceptions; that two days after the expiration of this order, on September 10, 1902, the board of county commissioners extended the time for settling the bill of exceptions to September 21, 1902; that on the 20th day of September the bill was settled, without notice of any kind having been served upon the defendants. The bill of exceptions was attempted to be settled under section 311 of the code, which, so far as it is necessary to consider it, is as follows: "When the decision is not entered on the record or the grounds of objection do not sufficiently appear in the entry, the party excepting must reduce his exceptions to writing within fifteen (15) days, or in such time as the court may direct, not exceeding forty (40) days from the adjournment sine die of the term of court at which judgment is rendered or at which the motion for new trial is ruled on, and submit the same to the adverse party or his attorney of record for examination and amendment if desired. * * * Within ten days after such submission the adverse party may propose amendments thereto and shall return said bill with his proposed amendments to the other party, or his attorney of record. The bill and proposed amendments must, within ten days thereafter, be presented by the party seeking the settlement of the bill to the judge who heard or tried the case, upon five (5) days' notice to the adverse party, or his attorney of record, at which time the judge shall settle the bill of exceptions. * * * In cases where a party seeking to obtain the allowance of the bill of exceptions has used due diligence in that behalf, but has failed to secure the settlement and allowance of the same as herein required, it shall be competent for the judge who tried the cause, upon due showing of diligence, and not otherwise, to extend the time herein allowed, but not beyond forty (40) days additional to that herein provided, making such specific directions in that behalf as shall seem just to all parties. *Provided*, that any person or officer, or the presiding officer of any board or tribunal before whom any

Field v. Nebraska Telephone Co.

proceedings may be had, shall, on request of any party thereto, settle, sign and allow a bill of exceptions of all the evidence offered or given on the hearing of such proceedings." The proviso with which this section closes was added to the section by amendment in the year 1895, plainly, as we think, for the purpose of making the provisions of the section applicable to inferior tribunals, officers and boards not included in the original section.

The contention of plaintiffs in error seems to be that the amendment of 1895 is an independent act, complete within itself, intended alone to govern the settlement of bills of exceptions in inferior tribunals, and that the general provisions of the act requiring the service of notice on the adverse party and limiting the time that may be allowed in the first instance to forty days have no application to bills of exceptions of proceedings from county boards and other inferior tribunals. With this contention we are unable to agree, for, if the act of 1895 is complete within itself and was intended as an independent act, it could not be passed as an amendment to section 311, *supra*, but must have been enacted under a separate title. As we view it, the amendment of 1895 is germane to the section to which it refers, and was simply intended to extend the provisions of the section to proceedings had in county boards and inferior tribunals. Thus considered, it should be interpreted as if the entire section as amended had been enacted at one time. The proper office of a proviso in a statute is to limit or qualify general provisions. The general provisions of the act require the bill of exceptions to be settled by the "judge who heard or tried the case," while the proviso added to the statute allows the bill to be approved by "any person or officer, or the presiding officer of any board or tribunal before whom the proceedings may be had." There is nothing, however, in the proviso qualifying the time in which the bill may be prepared or dispensing with the service of notice on the adverse party, as provided for in the body of the section. The right of a litigant to examine a bill of

Field v. Lincoln Gas & Electric Light Co.

exceptions which purports to contain all the evidence that was taken at the trial of the cause to which he is a party, and the privilege of suggesting amendments before the bill is settled and becomes conclusive of the facts therein recited, is a valuable right which should not be lightly denied; certainly not by the strained construction of the proviso of an act which, in itself, clearly recognizes and seeks to protect this right.

We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and LETTON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

ALLEN W. FIELD ET AL. V. LINCOLN GAS & ELECTRIC LIGHT
COMPANY ET AL.

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1905. No. 13,908.

Case Followed. For the reasons set forth in *Field v. Nebraska Telephone Co.*, ante, p. 419, the judgment of the district court is affirmed.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: EDWARD P. HOLMES, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

Allen W. Field and Tibbets & Anderson, for plaintiffs in error.

Halleck F. Rose and J. L. Caldwell, contra.

OLDHAM, C.

This is a companion case to *Field v. Nebraska Telephone Co.*, ante, p. 419, and involves the identical question on the settlement of a bill of exceptions from the

McKibbin v. Day.

county board of equalization therein determined. The causes were argued together, and for the reasons set forth therein, we recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and LETTON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in *Field v. Nebraska Telephone Co.*, ante, p. 419, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

SIMPSON MCKIBBIN ET AL. V. HENRY J. DAY.

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1905. No. 14,120.

1. Partnership: EVIDENCE. Evidence examined, and *held* sufficient to sustain the special finding of the jury that Simpson McKibbin was a member of the firm of McKibbin Brothers.
2. Trial: EVIDENCE. An error of the trial court in the admission of evidence, which is insufficient to support an allegation of the petition, may ordinarily be cured by striking the testimony from the record and especially withdrawing it from the consideration of the jury by an instruction.
3. Instructions of the trial court examined, and *held* not prejudicial.
4. Evidence: REVIEW. Action of the trial court in the admission of evidence examined, and *held* not prejudicial.
5. Award of damages examined, and *held* excessive; and further, *held* that, unless a remittitur of \$412.55 of the damages awarded be entered in this court, the judgment of the district court will be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: LINCOLN FROST, JUDGE. *Affirmed on condition.*

A. E. Harvey and Stewart & Munger, for plaintiffs in error.

L. O. Burr, contra.

OLDHAM, C.

This is an action for deceit, before this court for a second review. At the first review, a judgment in favor of the plaintiff and against the defendant Simpson McKibbin alone was reversed, and the cause was remanded for proceedings under the opinion. This opinion is reported in 71 Neb. 280. On a second trial of the issues to a jury in the court below, there was a verdict for the plaintiff against all of the defendants. Judgment was rendered on this verdict, and to reverse this judgment defendants bring error to this court.

In the former opinion the issues involved in the controversy are fully set out, consequently, a restatement is unnecessary. At the last trial of the cause in the district court, the question as to whether Simpson McKibbin was a member of the firm of McKibbin Brothers was by his own request submitted to the jury for a special finding, and the jury answered that he was a member of the firm. An examination of the testimony contained in the bill of exceptions shows that there is competent evidence to support this finding, consequently, the verdict against all the defendants is sufficiently supported.

At the last trial of the cause, plaintiff amended his petition on the allegations of fraud and deceit in the sale of the real estate involved in the controversy. Defendants filed a motion to strike this allegation from the petition, because, on the testimony introduced at the first trial, we had held that the evidence was not sufficient to support the allegation of damages. The motion was overruled, and plaintiff was permitted, over defendants' objections, to introduce his testimony tending to support this issue. When the testimony was all introduced, the court, being of the opinion that it was still insufficient, struck out all the testimony admitted as to false representations of the cash value and rental of the real estate conveyed to plaintiff, and gave an instruction to the jury specifically withdrawing this issue from its consideration. It is now

strongly urged in defendants' brief that this admission of testimony, in the first instance, and the overruling of the motion to strike this allegation from the petition were highly prejudicial to the defendants, although the testimony was subsequently stricken from the record and the issue withdrawn by instruction from the consideration of the jury.

In the first place; the court did not err in refusing to strike the allegation from the petition, because the evidence introduced at the first trial was insufficient to support it, for the court had no means of knowing what additional testimony might be offered at the second hearing. Again, the testimony offered and received, in the first instance, was not of such a peculiarly prejudicial character as to probably influence the jury in its finding on the alleged fraud and deceit charged to have been practiced on the plaintiff in the sale of the stock of goods. When testimony is admitted and is not connected in such a manner as to make it material to the allegation it tends to support, the error in its admission at first is ordinarily cured by the action of the trial court in striking the testimony from the record and withdrawing it from the consideration of the jury by special instructions.

The next alleged error called to our attention in defendants' brief is that the court refused to give any instructions that fairly presented defendants' theory of the case to the jury. The case, as submitted to the jury, depended upon alleged fraudulent representations made by defendants to the plaintiff concerning the value of a stock of goods which defendants traded to plaintiff. Plaintiff's theory was that defendants had falsely and knowingly represented that the stock of goods had been invoiced at the first of the year, 1902, and that by such invoice they were shown to be of the value of \$6,700; and that between the time of the invoice and the sale of the goods on April 30, 1902, defendants had made additions by purchase to the stock of goods sufficient to increase its value to the sum of \$7,000. De-

defendants practically admitted the representations, but denied that they were fraudulently made, or that the goods were not of the value claimed. Plaintiff's testimony tended to show conclusively that the value of the stock of goods was but \$4,353.31. Defendants introduced testimony tending to show that in July, 1901, there had been some kind of an invoice of the stock, as it then existed, and while contained in another building with some different fixtures, which invoice approximated \$6,700. But the pretended invoice was incomplete, some pages missing, and included, among other things, items of \$233 cash in the drawer, and \$650 in notes and accounts. Under the issues thus arising on the testimony, the court instructed the jury much more at length than was necessary, but each of the instructions cast the burden on the plaintiff to show by a preponderance of the evidence that the representations of value made were false, and that they were made either with a reckless disregard of their verity, or with knowledge that they were false when made. The instructions were all framed to reflect the law of the case as determined at the first hearing in this court, and we are not pointed to any instructions which are inherently wrong.

Complaint is made in the brief of the defendants as to the action of the trial court in the admission of evidence, and in the latitude given the plaintiff's counsel in the cross-examination of the defendants. When deceit and fraud are alleged, a liberal range of investigation is properly permitted in the proof of such issues, and we have examined each of the several complaints in this regard and are satisfied that the trial judge did not exceed his proper discretion in his rulings in these matters.

It is next urged that the damages are excessive. In a determination of this question, we have made a careful examination of the evidence contained in the record, and are convinced, from such examination, that the quantum of damages awarded in the verdict exceed the proper measure of plaintiff's recovery, under the evidence and

McKibbin v. Day.

the instructions given to the jury. Plaintiff's evidence shows very conclusively that an invoice of the stock of goods, made by competent and disinterested persons of large experience and unquestioned skill in mercantile pursuits, shows the value of the stock to have been \$4,353.31 at the time it was purchased by plaintiff. Now, the measure of plaintiff's damage was the difference between the value of the stock as represented by the defendants and its actual value. Deducting the actual value of the stock from its represented value, the difference is \$2,646.69. Allowing interest at the rate of 7 per cent. for 31 months—the time intervening between the purchase of the goods and the date of the trial—the amount of the interest, which is \$478.61, added to the principal (\$2,646.69) is \$3,125.30, or \$412.55 less than the damages awarded in the verdict.

We therefore recommend that, unless plaintiff enters a remittitur of \$412.55 of the damages awarded, the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings; but that, if such remittitur be entered within thirty days of the filing of this opinion, the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and LETTON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that, unless the plaintiff, Henry J. Day, enter a remittitur in this court of \$412.55 of the damages awarded in the court below, the judgment of the district court will be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings; but, if such remittitur be entered within thirty days, the judgment of the district court w

AFFIRMED.

**WILLIAM POCHIN, APPELLER, v. FRANK N. CONLEY ET AL,
APPELLEES, IMPEADED WITH V. E. JAKWAY, APPEL-
LANT.**

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1905. No. 13,392.

1. **Mortgage: DEFICIENCY JUDGMENT: LIMITATION.** An application for a deficiency judgment should be made within the time that the statute would bar an action on the note secured by the mortgage on the foreclosure of which the deficiency arises, the statute commencing to run from confirmation of the foreclosure sale.
2. **Married Women: MORTGAGE.** A married woman is not bound by the covenants in a deed or mortgage, where she joins with her husband in making the same for the sole purpose of releasing her dower interest. Comp. St. 1903, ch. 72, sec. 42.

APPEAL from the district court for Custer county:
BRUNO O. HOSTETLER, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

R. A. Moore, for appellant.

C. L. Gutterson, Charles H. Holcomb and Moore & Ledwich, contra.

DUFFIE, C.

Nels Anderson, one of the defendants, purchased 160 acres of land in Custer county from one Mary G. Thornburg in June, 1892, for \$1,600. At that time there was an \$800 mortgage on the land in favor of the Globe Investment Company, which mortgage was deducted from the purchase price. Anderson paid Mrs. Thornburg \$500 in cash and gave a second mortgage on the land for \$300 to secure the balance of the purchase money. The \$800 mortgage given to the Globe Investment Company was transferred to William Pochin, who commenced foreclosure proceedings thereon and obtained a decree on December 3, 1896. The \$300 mortgage given to Mrs. Thornburg was by her transferred to the appellant, Mrs. Jakway, who was made a party defendant in the foreclosure action commenced by Pochin. The decree found

that there was due on the mortgage held by Pochin \$946.66, and on the mortgage held by Mrs. Jakway, \$391.50. An order of sale issued on this decree and the land was sold in June, 1898, and the premises bought in by William Pochin, plaintiff in the action, for \$600. The proceeds of the sale being insufficient to satisfy the decree in favor of Pochin, of course there was nothing to apply on the second lien of Mrs. Jakway. This sale was confirmed by an order of the district court entered on June 21, 1898, and the sheriff ordered to make a deed to the plaintiff, Pochin. The sheriff's deed was made October 29, 1898. On July 24, 1903, Mrs. Jakway filed in the district court for Custer county what is termed an "application for judgment and supplemental answer"; this paper being entitled the same as the foreclosure proceedings commenced by Pochin. In this application and supplemental answer Mrs. Jakway alleges all of the matters above set out, and states further that, the Pochin mortgage having been deducted from the purchase price of the land at the time Nels Anderson bought from Mrs. Thornburg, he was in duty bound to pay the same; that he and his wife, Clara Anderson, for the purpose of defeating the mortgage held by Mrs. Jakway and depriving her of her security, permitted Pochin to foreclose his mortgage, and after the decree and sale, but before the making of the sheriff's deed, Mrs. Anderson took from him a quitclaim deed, which, it is alleged, amounts to nothing more than a redemption from the sale. The prayer is that personal judgment may be entered against both Nels and Clara Anderson for the amount found due her by the decree in the Pochin foreclosure, and that the judgment be made a special lien upon the mortgaged premises. Both Nels and Clara Anderson filed answers, and by a lengthy reply filed by Mrs. Jakway the facts are set out more in detail; the theory being that, Mrs. Anderson having joined with her husband in the mortgage given to Mrs. Thornburg, she is now estopped by the covenants therein from setting up title to the land as against that mortgage. It is fur-

ther claimed that the money paid Pochin for the quitclaim deed was principally furnished by Nels Anderson, and that he is the equitable owner of the land. A decree went in favor of the Andersons, and Mrs. Jakway has brought the case here by appeal.

Among other defenses interposed by the Andersons was the statute of limitations, but the decree entered does not show what view was taken by the district court of that defense. Whether Mrs. Jakway in her answer in the Pochin foreclosure action asked for a deficiency judgment against Nels Anderson, who alone signed the note secured by Mrs. Jakway's mortgage, does not appear, but the presumption is that no such relief was asked, the foreclosure decree not making any reference to such a claim made either by Pochin or by Mrs. Jakway. We have, then, this case: A decree of foreclosure entered in December, 1896; a sale under that decree which was confirmed in June, 1898; a deed from the purchaser to Mrs. Anderson after the confirmation, but before the execution of the sheriff's deed. The confirmation of the sale divested Nels Anderson of his title to the property, and, while the sheriff's deed was not executed until October, 1898, he still became the equitable owner of the land upon the confirmation of the sale. *Lamb v. Sherman*, 19 Neb. 681; *Yeazel v. White*, 40 Neb. 432. The sale and the confirmation satisfied the Pochin decree to the extent of \$600, the amount bid upon the land, and we do not see how it can be claimed that redemption from the decree could thereafter be made. After the sale to Pochin was completed by confirmation, he could sell his interest in the land, and Mrs. Anderson had the same right as any other to make the purchase. If the money was furnished by her husband, that fact might be established in a proper action and the land subjected to the satisfaction of any judgment against him; but it does not appear that Mrs. Jakway is a judgment creditor. Upon confirmation of the sale she was entitled to a deficiency judgment against Nels Anderson, who alone signed the note secured by her

Pochin v. Conley.

mortgage; but no judgment has yet been established against him for a deficiency, and, if we treat the pleading in this case as an application for such judgment, the defense of the statute of limitations was interposed and ought to be sustained.

In *Durkee v. Kochler*, 73 Neb. 833, it was held that an application for a deficiency judgment should be made within the time that the statute would bar an action on the note or account on which the lien is based, counting from the date of confirmation of the sale of the property. More than five years from confirmation having elapsed before the filing of this supplemental answer, the right to a deficiency judgment is barred by the statute, and the court properly dismissed the application. Mrs. Anderson is not estopped by the covenants in the mortgage held by Mrs. Jakway. She did not hold title to the mortgaged premises at the time it was given, but joined with her husband only for the purpose of releasing her dower. By section 48, chapter 73, Compiled Statutes 1903 (Ann. St. 10251), it is provided that "a married woman shall not be bound by any covenant in a joint deed of herself and husband," and, while it has been held that this statute was abrogated by the married woman's act, so far as it attempted to release her from covenants made in a conveyance of property held in her own right and in which her husband joins, the statute is still effective to protect her against covenants contained in a deed in which she joins with her husband in a conveyance of property owned by him for the sole purpose of releasing her dower interest.

The decree of the district court was correct, and we recommend its affirmance.

JACKSON, C., concurs. ALBERT, C., not sitting.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the decree of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

LANCASTER COUNTY ET AL. V. MARY FITZGERALD ET AL.

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1905. No. 13,869.

1. **Bond: PLEADING.** It is essential to a recovery on a bond to plead a breach of the condition, and a petition which fails to allege such breach is fatally defective.
2. **Waste: COUNTY MAY MAINTAIN.** When taxes against real estate are past due and unpaid, the county by which the taxes were levied may maintain a suit to restrain waste, where the acts complained of would reduce the value of the property to an amount insufficient to pay the taxes.
3. ———: ———. In order to maintain such suit it is not necessary that the county should first become a purchaser of the property at tax sale.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county:
EDWARD P. HOLMES, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

James L. Caldwell, F. M. Tyrrell and Charles E. Matson, for plaintiffs in error.

J. C. McNerney, R. D. Stearns and Frank D. Eager, *contra.*

ALBERT, C.

This suit was brought by Lancaster county in 1902 to restrain the defendants from removing a building from certain lots on which the county claimed a lien by virtue of taxes levied by said county under its general authority to levy and collect them. In its original petition the plaintiff alleged the levy of the taxes against the property for the years 1892 to 1901, inclusive; that said taxes were past due and unpaid; that the lots with the building thereon are of sufficient value to pay said taxes, but would be wholly insufficient therefor should said building be removed; that the defendant Eager was proceeding to raze said building, and to remove the same and the material of which it is constructed from said lots.

A temporary restraining order was allowed. Shortly afterwards the plaintiff and the defendant Eager entered into a written stipulation to the effect that the restraining order should be dissolved upon said defendants entering into a bond to the plaintiff, with sufficient sureties, conditioned "that in case the taxes, or any part thereof, set out in plaintiff's petition shall be finally decreed to be a lien upon the building and material taken therefrom by said defendant, as alleged in plaintiff's petition, said defendant shall pay the amount of said taxes to the plaintiff county, not exceeding the value of said building." In pursuance of this stipulation the defendant Eager, with the United States Fidelity & Guaranty Company, as surety, gave the bond, and thereupon the restraining order was dissolved. Thereafter, leave of court having first been obtained, the county treasurer filed a petition of intervention, and the plaintiff filed an amended and supplemental petition. The petition of intervention and the amended and supplemental petition are substantially the same. Both allege the due levy of taxes for 1892 to 1901, inclusive, upon said lots, and the nonpayment of such taxes; that the property had been duly offered for sale at tax sale, but had not been sold for want of bidders; that said taxes, including interest, penalties, etc., aggregate \$600; that since the commencement of the action the defendant Eager had removed the building from said lots, and disposed of the material in such a way that it could no longer be identified; that by reason of the removal of said building the lots were not worth to exceed \$50, whereas before said removal they were worth more than sufficient to satisfy the said taxes, interest, penalties, etc. Both pleadings also contain allegations showing the execution of the bond hereinbefore referred to, a copy of which is set out in said pleadings, the dissolution of the restraining order in pursuance of the stipulation, and the formal allegation that the plaintiff and intervener respectively have no adequate remedy at law. The surety on the bond was brought in as a party defendant, and both it and the de-

fendant Eager demurred to the amended and supplemental petition of the plaintiff, as well as to the petition of intervention. The several demurrers were sustained, and plaintiff's amended and supplemental petition, as well as the petition of intervention, dismissed. The case is here on error.

So far as the demurrers interposed by the Fidelity & Guaranty Company are concerned, we have no hesitation in saying that they were properly sustained. Its liability, if any, is on the bond. The condition of the bond is "that if it shall be finally decreed that said items of taxes, or any of them, are a lien on said property, including the building on said lots, and if, in that event, the said Frank D. Eager shall well and truly pay such taxes as decreed," etc. No breach of this condition is pleaded. On the contrary, the record shows affirmatively that the decree upon which the payment of the taxes by Eager is made contingent has never been entered. Until that decree is entered there can be no breach of the conditions, and until there is such breach there can be no recovery on the bond. This obstacle to a recovery is not overcome by the allegation that there is no adequate remedy at law. While that plight is often held sufficient to give a remedy, it is never held sufficient to create a right, nor to vary or modify the stipulated condition upon which the liability of a party to an obligation depends. What we have said with respect to the Fidelity & Guaranty Company applies to the defendant Eager, so far as the plaintiff and the intervenor seek to recover on the bond, because his liability on the bond is to be tested by the same rules as that of his surety, so far as the sufficiency of the pleadings in question is concerned.

But where a pleading is assailed by a general demurrer, the question is whether it entitles him to any relief; and although, as we have seen, neither the plaintiff nor intervenor can recover on the bond, it still remains to determine whether the facts pleaded by them entitle them to any form of relief. The theory of the plaintiff and the inter-

vener seems to be that this is an action in the nature of waste, and, while we agree in the view that both petitions are sufficient to charge the defendant with waste, we are met with the defendants' proposition that neither the plaintiff nor the intervener have sufficient title to maintain waste. We are not unacquainted with the technical rules which formerly prevailed with respect to the action of waste, and the action on the case in the nature of waste, but these rules have been greatly relaxed. An injunction restraining waste was granted at the suit of a judgment creditor, whose judgment was a lien on the premises, in *Vandemark v. Schoonmaker*, 9 Hun (N. Y.), 16, and *Witmer's Appeal*, 45 Pa. St. 455; at the suit of an attaching creditor in *Camp v. Bates*, 11 Conn. *51, 27 Am. Dec. 707. See also *Jones v. Britton*, 102 N. Car. 166; *Thompson v. Lynam*, 1 Del. Ch. 64; *Braswell v. Morehead*, 45 N. Car. 26.

By the provisions of the revenue law then in force the taxes were a lien on the real estate. Comp. St. 1901, ch. 77, art. I, sec. 138. The county treasurer was authorized to enforce the collection of the taxes by a sale. To that end he was the trustee of the state and the subdivisions thereof for whose benefit the taxes were levied. *Logan County v. Carnahan*, 66 Neb. 685. That being true, in view of the authorities cited, it is clear to us that the county treasurer, as such trustee, had a right to bring and maintain a suit of this character. But when the taxes are collected they pass to the county, which then becomes the trustee for their disbursement. *Logan County v. Carnahan*, *supra*. As between the treasurer and the county the latter is the party ultimately entitled to the taxes, or, in other words, the real party in interest, and, as such, is competent to bring and maintain this suit. It follows from what has been said that Eager's demurrers, not only to plaintiff's petition, but to the petition of intervention, should have been overruled, not on the ground that they state a cause of action on the bond, because they do not, but because they do state facts sufficient to constitute a

Beer v. Wisner.

cause of action for waste. The defendant Fitzgerald appears to be only a nominal party, and for that reason this will be a sufficient reference to her.

It is therefore recommended that the decree of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings according to law.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CO., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the decree of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings according to law.

REVERSED.

MAX BEER, APPELLER, v. JOHN E. WISNER ET AL.,
APPELLANTS.

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1905. No. 13,879.

Real Estate Contract: CONSTRUCTION. A party borrowed the amount necessary to pay the purchase price of certain real estate, for the purchase of which he had made an oral contract with the owner, giving his note therefor. To secure the payment of the note it was orally agreed among the vendor, the vendee and the payee of the note that upon payment of the note the title of the real estate should be conveyed to the vendee, but upon default in such payment it should be conveyed to the bank. Afterwards the vendee was adjudged a bankrupt and a trustee appointed for his estate. *Held:*

(1.) That so long as the vendee, or those claiming under him, base their claim upon the three-sided contract, they must accept it in its entirety, and will not be permitted to avail themselves of those terms which are favorable and reject those which are onerous.

(2.) That the vendee took merely the equitable title, subject to a lien in favor of the holder of the note for the amount due thereon, and that the trustee of his estate occupies no more advantageous position.

APPEAL from the district court for Lincoln county:
HANSON M. GRIMES, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

Beeler & Muldoon, for appellants.

Wilcox & Halligan, contra.

ALBERT, C.

This is an appeal from a decree of foreclosure. It appears from the record that one Baskins was formerly the owner in fee of the real estate involved, and that he entered into an oral contract for the sale thereof to one Baker. To enable Baker to raise the money to pay the purchase price, it was orally agreed among Baskins, Baker and the First National Bank of North Platte that the bank should advance the money required, taking Baker's note therefor; that upon the payment of this note the fee title to the premises should pass to Baker, but upon default in the payment of the note the title should pass to the bank. In pursuance of this agreement the bank advanced the money, which was paid to Baskins; Baker executed his note therefor to the bank, and Baskins executed a deed to the real estate, leaving a blank space for the insertion of the grantee's name, and delivered it to the president of the bank, with the understanding on the part of all concerned that, upon payment of Baker's note to the bank, the president should insert Baker's name in the deed as grantee and deliver it to him, but that, upon default of such payment, the name of the bank should be inserted as grantee and the deed delivered to it. Under this arrangement Baker took possession of the premises. Afterwards Baker transferred his interest in the premises to one Hamilton, and, in pursuance of an oral arrangement among the parties concerned, Baker's note to the bank was canceled, and that of Hamilton taken instead, with the same understanding for the transfer of the title to the premises on payment of this note or in default of such payment as had previously existed, save that Hamilton stood in the place of Baker. Hamilton in turn transferred his interest in the premises to the defendant Wis-

ner, and thereupon his note to the bank was canceled, and that of Wisner taken instead for the balance due on the purchase price. The understanding for the transfer of the title to the premises was renewed with respect to Wisner, who took possession and continued in possession of the premises until March 14, 1903, when he was adjudged a bankrupt, and the defendant Roach was appointed trustee of his estate. The trustee thereupon leased the premises to the defendant F. E. Wisner. On the 17th day of March, 1903, the bank transferred Wisner's note, which had been given in lieu of Hamilton's and which was then past due, to the plaintiff, and thereupon the plaintiff's name was inserted as grantee in the deed and the deed delivered to him. Afterwards on the 17th day of February, 1904, without any further consideration, Baskins executed and delivered to the plaintiff a quitclaim deed for the premises. The trial court found that the plaintiff had a lien on the premises for the amount due on the note given by Wisner to the bank for the balance due on the purchase price, and entered a decree of foreclosure, from which the trustee of the bankrupt estate alone appeals.

The appellant contends that the bank had no lien on the premises, and consequently none passed to the plaintiff by the transfer to him of the note by the bank. The argument in support of this contention is based on two propositions which are thus stated in the brief: (1) "The deed was void for all purposes, being executed and delivered in blank, and therefore no rights could be based thereon." (2) "The delivery of the deed, even though a valid deed, would not create a lien or mortgage, because it was not accompanied with any writing signed by any of the parties sought to be charged, wherein it was agreed that the deed should operate as a mortgage on the premises to secure said note, and this was the condition of matters on the said 13th day of March, 1903, when the defendant Wisner was adjudged a bankrupt, and upon which day the rights and interests of the trustees became vested."

Brownfield v. Union P. R. Co.

Both of these propositions might be conceded, and still the plaintiff's right to a lien on the premises would not be negatived. Whatever right the appellant, the trustee of the bankrupt's estate, has in the premises, must be based on the three-sided contract for the purchase of the premises, and so long as he claims under that contract, he must accept or reject it in its entirety; he will not be permitted to avail himself of those terms which are favorable to him and reject those which are onerous. By the terms of that contract the title in fee simple was to pass to the bankrupt upon the payment of his note to the bank, and in default of such payment the title was to pass to the bank. The bankrupt could never compel a conveyance of the title in fee to him until he had performed or offered to perform his part of the three-sided contract, namely, paid his note to the bank; and the trustee of the estate of the bankrupt obviously occupies no better position. The note has not been paid, and the decree of the district court, which is an ordinary decree of foreclosure of a mortgage lien, is as favorable to the trustee as he has a right to ask, and we recommend that it be affirmed.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CO., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the decree of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

**NATHANIEL BROWNFIELD V. UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD
COMPANY.**

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1905. No. 13,322.

Trial: INSTRUCTIONS. Where a party has produced proof tending to sustain his theory of the case, he is entitled to have such theory submitted to the jury by suitable instructions, without qualifying words calculated to mislead the jury into the belief that, although they may find the theory of such party to be true, they may return a verdict for the opposing party.

ERROR to the district court for Dawson county: BRUNO O. HOSTETLER, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

Warrington & Stewart, for plaintiff in error.

John N. Baldwin, Edson Rich, John A. Sheean and E. A. Cook, contra.

JACKSON, C.

This is a proceeding in error to reverse a judgment of the district court for Dawson county, Nebraska. The plaintiff in error sued the defendant in error in the court below to recover the value of certain cattle, which in his petition he claims were killed by having been run over by certain of defendant's engines at a place where by law the defendant was required to maintain a fence along each side of its right of way; it being alleged in the petition that the defendant negligently omitted to maintain a suitable and sufficient fence along the south side of its right of way, and that a large number of plaintiff's cattle strayed upon defendant's right of way and railroad track, without any neglect or fault on the part of the plaintiff, and while said cattle were so on the defendant's railroad track the defendant, by its servants and employees, carelessly and negligently and without due caution, propelled certain of its engines, with cars attached thereto, over and upon fifteen head of the plaintiff's cattle, killing eleven and injuring and crippling four. The defendant, by its answer, denied that it did not maintain a suitable fence along each side of its right of way, and alleged that it did maintain such fence and that the same was in good repair. It admitted that it was a corporation, and denied each and every other allegation in the petition. It further alleged that if any injury was caused to said stock it was due to the carelessness and negligence of the plaintiff, and not by the carelessness or negligence of the defendant or any of its servants. The reply was a denial of any care-

lessness or negligence on the part of the plaintiff. There was a trial to the court and a jury, resulting in a judgment and verdict for the defendant. The plaintiff prosecutes error.

The evidence discloses that in the night time on the 16th day of August, 1903, a large number of the plaintiff's cattle entered upon the right of way of the defendant, and that a passing train struck and killed eleven cattle and injured four others.

Many assignments of error are presented by the petition, including the giving of instructions numbered 7 and 9, given by the court on its own motion. Instruction numbered 7 reads as follows: "The court instructs the jury that by the law of this state the defendant was required to erect and maintain a fence suitable and amply sufficient to prevent cattle from getting onto the railroad track, at and along the right of way, where the cattle were killed and injured. If plaintiff satisfies you by a preponderance of the evidence that defendant failed to keep and maintain such a fence as herein described, and that the cattle were killed and injured because of such fact, then the defendant is liable, and your verdict will be for the plaintiff, unless you find for the defendant upon other instructions herein given." It is contended that this instruction is erroneous because of the words, "Unless you find for the defendant upon other instructions herein given." With this contention we agree. The plaintiff was entitled to an instruction advising the jury that, if they were satisfied by a preponderance of the evidence that the defendant failed to keep and maintain a fence suitable and amply sufficient to prevent the cattle from getting onto its railroad track, and that, if by reason of that fact, the plaintiff's cattle escaped upon the railroad track and were killed, the defendant was liable, and that their verdict should be for the plaintiff. He was entitled to that instruction without qualification. The qualifying words added can have but one meaning, and that is, that under a certain state of facts it was the duty of the jury

to find for the plaintiff, unless they should find for the defendant. There is some evidence in the record tending to show that the fence in question was not suitable for the purpose required by the statute, and the evidence is undisputed that on the morning after the cattle were killed some of the wires were down in at least two places, and for that reason the error in the instruction was prejudicial.

Instruction numbered 9 is as follows: "The court instructs the jury that, if you find from the evidence that the stock escaped upon the track of the defendant through a gate erected by the company for the accommodation of the plaintiff, and the plaintiff at the time had failed to lock and secure the gate, and by reason of such failure on his part the stock went through such gate and upon the track and were there killed, then the defendant is not liable to the plaintiff for such killing, unless you should further find that the killing or injury to such cattle was done through the negligence of the servants of defendant in operating their train." The particular portion of this instruction complained of is that part reading as follows: "And the plaintiff at the time had failed to lock and secure the gate, and by reason of such failure on his part the stock went through such gate and upon the track and were there killed, then the defendant is not liable." It is doubtless true that the only obligation resting upon the plaintiff with reference to the gate was to close and secure the same with the means provided for that purpose by the defendant. He was not required to lock the gate, which according to the ordinary meaning of the word lock would be to lock the gate with a key. No such obligation could be imposed upon the plaintiff, especially under the facts in this case, which disclose that such was not the means provided by the defendant for securing the gate. The giving of the latter instruction, however, might not be held to be prejudicial, because the undisputed evidence is that on the evening before the cattle were killed the gate was fastened in the manner provided by the company for that

purpose, and that the means so provided were amply sufficient for the purpose intended.

For the error in instruction numbered 7 we recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

REVERSED.

NANNIE W. FISCUS ET AL. v. JOSEPH R. WILSON ET AL.

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1905. No. 13,875.

1. **Mortgage: CONSTRUCTION.** A receives from B the sum of \$5,000, and executes and delivers to B a mortgage on real estate providing for the payment of \$300 per annum during the lifetime of B. The mortgage contains the following provision: "It is understood and agreed that the intention of the parties hereto is to secure to said B the interest on said principal sum of \$5,000 during the term or period of his natural life, and, in case the interest is paid according to the terms thereof, the principal sum of \$5,000 is to remain to said A, her heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, and upon the death of said B and payments of interest as aforesaid this obligation is to become null and void." *Held* not to be an attempt at a testamentary disposition of B's property.
2. **Contract: CONSTRUCTION.** In the determination of the rights of parties to a contract, the contract should be construed in the light of surrounding circumstances and the condition of the parties at the time of making it.
3. ———: ———. Where the parties to a contract have, with a knowledge of its terms, given it a particular construction, such construction will generally be adopted by the courts in giving effect to its provisions.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: EDWARD P. HOLMES, JUDGE. *Reversed with directions.*

Robert Ryan, for plaintiffs in error.

A. M. Harrah, Geo. E. Hibner, Hall & Marlay, Willard E. Stewart, Thomas C. Muñger, Mockett & Polk, C. O. Whedon and N. K. Griggs, contra.

JACKSON, C.

This action involves the right of certain heirs of William W. Wilson, deceased, in a partition proceeding, to participate in the distribution of the partitioned estate in proportion to their respective shares, without diminution on account of the financial transactions of such heirs with the deceased in his lifetime. William W. Wilson died intestate in Lancaster county on the 20th day of March, 1901. His surviving heirs were Joseph R. Wilson, Carrie W. Covert, Roxana Wilson, Mary A. Wilson, Carrie C. Slater, Katharine Saum Howard, Jay Saum, Jennie L. Shuster, D. Banks Wilson, William W. Cook, Nannie W. Fiscus, Zachariah T. Wilson, Burt Wilson, Minnie Wilson Royer, Foss Wilson and Gladys Glenn. During the lifetime of the deceased he delivered to Nannie W. Fiscus the sum of \$5,000, and she, joining with her husband, executed and delivered to him a certain mortgage bond in the sum of \$10,000, conditioned "for the payment of three hundred dollars (\$300) on the 24th day of May, 1894, and the like sum of three hundred dollars (\$300) on the 24th day of May of each and every year thereafter following, during the term of said Wilson's natural life; the said annual sum of three hundred dollars (\$300) each being legal interest at the rate of six per cent. on five thousand dollars (\$5,000) this day advanced to Nannie W. Fiscus by said Wilson; and, in case of default of said first parties hereto in the payment of any one of the said instalments of interest for the period of thirty days after said instalments of interest become due, then in that event the whole amount of said principal sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000), together with the interest thereon, shall become due and pay-

Fiscus v. Wilson.

able forthwith; and it is understood and agreed that the intention of the parties hereto is to secure to said W. W. Wilson the interest on said principal sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) during the term or period of his natural life, and in case the interest is paid according to the terms thereof, the principal sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) is to remain to the said Nannie W. Fiscus, her heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, and, upon the death of said W. W. Wilson and the payments of interest as aforesaid, this obligation is to become null and void, and of no effect." This bond also described certain real estate in Pennsylvania, which the makers pledged as security for the performance of the conditions of the bond; and later in the bond it was provided: "In case of default being made at any time in the payment of any one of the said instalments of interest, or any part thereof, for thirty days after the same falls due as aforesaid, the whole of said debt and interest shall, at the option of the said party of the second part, his executors, administrators or assigns; thereupon become due and payable." A further provision in the bond was: "That if the said Calvin S. Fiscus and Nannie W. Fiscus, their heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, do and shall well and truly pay, or cause to be paid, unto the said party of the second part, his heirs, executors, administrators or assigns, the interest as aforesaid on the days and times hereinbefore mentioned and appointed for the payment thereof, in like money in the way and manner hereinbefore specified, and all taxes that may be assessed on this mortgage, without any fraud or further delay, and without any reduction, defalcation or abatement to be made for or in respect of any taxes, charges or assessments whatever, then and from thenceforth as well this present indenture, and the estate hereby granted, as the said obligations above recited, shall cease, determine, and become absolutely null and void to all intent and purposes; anything hereinbefore contained to the contrary thereof in anywise notwithstanding."

They also at the same time delivered what might be

termed a contract, containing this provision: "The condition of this obligation is such that if the above bounden Calvin S. Fiscus and Nannie W. Fiscus, his wife, their heirs, executors and administrators, or any of them, shall and do well and truly pay or cause to be paid unto the above named W. W. Wilson the just and full sum of three hundred dollars (\$300) on the 24th day of May, A. D. 1894, and a like sum of three hundred dollars (\$300) on the 24th day of May of each and every year following thereafter during the term or period of said Wilson's natural life, the said annual sum of three hundred dollars (\$300) each being legal interest at the rate of six per cent. on five thousand dollars (\$5,000) this day advanced by said W. W. Wilson to said Nannie W. Fiscus, and in case of default of said first parties hereto in the payment of any of the said instalments of interest for the period of thirty days after said instalments of interest become due, then and in that event the whole amount of said principal sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000), together with interest thereon, shall become due and payable forthwith. And it is understood and agreed that the intention of the parties hereto is to secure the said W. W. Wilson the interest on said principal sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) during the term or period of his natural life, and, in case the interest is paid according to the terms thereof, the principal sum of five thousand dollars (\$5,000) is to remain to said Nannie W. Fiscus, her heirs, executors and administrators, and assigns, and upon the death of said W. W. Wilson and payment of interest as aforesaid this obligation to become null and void and of no effect."

The interest payments on this bond were made by Nannie W. Fiscus and her husband up to and including the payment due in May, 1899, and no payments were thereafter made by them. On the 24th day of July, 1894, the deceased executed a formal release of the mortgage bond given by Nannie W. Fiscus and her husband. This release he had in his possession until some time in 1898, when it was delivered to S. B. Donaldson, an attorney at law at

Fiscus v. Wilson.

Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania, who later gave to Wilson a written receipt as follows: "Pittsburg, Pa., Sept. 23, 1898. Received from W. W. Wilson a release of a mortgage given by Calvin S. Fiscus and Nannie W. Fiscus, his wife, to said Wilson. The said mortgage is for \$5,000 and recorded in the recorder's office of Allegheny Co. state of Pennsylvania, in mortgage book vol. 663, page 487. The said release and satisfaction is to be held in escrow by me and is to be recorded in said recorder's office of Allegheny Co. upon the decease of said W. W. Wilson. S. B. Donaldson."

Concerning the custody of this release, Mr. Donaldson testified: "That he met the deceased at the home of Nannie W. Fiscus, and, after being introduced to Mr. Wilson, Wilson said: 'I want to consult you about a mortgage which I hold against Mrs. Nannie Fiscus, covering this property here.' He said to me that he understood that some question might be raised as to the satisfaction of the same, notwithstanding the terms of the mortgage providing that it should be canceled and satisfied at his death. He said he had given Mrs. Fiscus this money, and that he did not wish her to have any difficulty whatever with it when he was gone, and that the property was to be entirely clear of the mortgage at the time of his death; that he had a paper prepared which he thought would satisfy the record in such a way as to make her title clear and unincumbered so far as his mortgage was concerned. He then proposed to leave said paper with me. In case of his death, I should file it or have it filed in the recorder's office of Allegheny county. He told me to take the paper with me and examine it carefully, and, if I thought it would not make such a record as would fully discharge the mortgage, to prepare another paper that would give her a record clear of said mortgage and that would not likely be questioned. * * * He said: 'I have given her this money, I want the record of her mortgage to be clear when I am gone.' * * * Mr. Wilson said that he intended only to collect interest on the money so long as he

saw fit, and in no event was there any interest or any money whatever to be accounted for by Mrs. Fiscus or her husband at the time of or after his decease. I was to keep said release, which he delivered to me, until after his death, and then to be entered by me of record, and not to be recorded before that time unless he authorized me to do so." The release was filed and recorded on the 1st day of April, 1901.

On July 7, 1898, the deceased wrote a letter to Mrs. Fiscus from Lincoln, Nebraska, in which he said: "Has Mr. Donaldson given you his opinion of the matter and where? If so, tell me what he said, and if he wants me to execute some new papers. I am anxious to have it done right, as I want you to have no further trouble about it when I am gone the way of all flesh; so ask him to give you his opinion and not me. I will in all probability write Mr. Donaldson and try and fix things that will last." In a later letter he said: "Was glad to know that Mr. Donaldson thought the release I gave him to hold was sufficient; but if at any time he should alter his opinion, let me know it, and we will make new writings that will be good, as I am very anxious to make it beyond a doubt."

On the 28th day of April, 1894, Katharine Saum Howard, then Katharine Saum, received from the deceased the sum of \$3,000, and at that time executed and delivered to the deceased a mortgage on certain real estate in Iowa. The conditions of the mortgage were as follows: "Provided, always, that these presents are upon the express condition that if the said Katharine Saum or her heirs, executors or administrators, shall pay or cause to be paid to the said W. W. Wilson, during the full term of his natural life, the sum of one hundred and eighty dollars (\$180) annually—said payments shall commence the first day of May, 1895, and annually on the first day of May thereafter during his life; said sum being interest at the rate of six (6) per cent. per annum upon the aforesaid sum of three thousand dollars (\$3,000)—and also pay six

(6) per cent. per annum on all annual payments that are not paid at maturity, then and in that event these presents shall be void and of no effect. And it is further agreed and understood that in case default be made at any time in the payment of any one of said instalments of interest, or any part thereof, or for taxes that may be assessed or levied on said premises for thirty days after the same become due and delinquent as aforesaid, then the whole of said debt and interest shall become due and payable at the option of said W. W. Wilson. And it is still further provided that if the said Katharine Saum, her heirs, administrators or executors, shall refuse or neglect at any time to pay the taxes when due as herein provided, then the said W. W. Wilson may pay the same, which sum so paid, with ten (10) per cent. interest per annum, shall be a lien upon said premises like the principal. The intention of this instrument is to secure to the said W. W. Wilson, during his natural lifetime, the interest upon three thousand dollars (\$3,000) at the rate of six (6) per cent., payable annually, and in the event these conditions are strictly fulfilled, the said sum of three thousand dollars (\$3,000) shall be vested in the said Katharine Saum, her heirs, administrators or executors, forever." The annual payments provided for by the mortgage had been fully paid at the time of Wilson's death, so that there was no default on the part of Katharine Saum Howard.

On July 10, 1900, the deceased wrote Mrs. Howard from Lincoln, addressing her as follows: "Dear Katharine: I wrote you yesterday and forgot to mention about that release I left with Mr. Harrah. You do not really need a note from Mr. H., but you had better preserve his letter to you acknowledging the note of the release left by me. That is all you need, but I took a receipt from him as it is necessary in case it should be put on record without my consent. I think you are perfectly safe, as you have his letter explaining you that he has it, and that is as good as a formal receipt, so don't worry any more over that. And if anything happens to me, you know where it is, and all

you have to do is to pay up the interest to the date of my death and get the release."

On the 1st day of June, 1894, Wilson executed a formal release of the Katharine Saum mortgage, and on June 27, 1900, delivered the release to A. M. Harrah, an attorney at law at Newton, Iowa, taking Mr. Harrah's receipt, as follows: "Newton, Iowa, June 27, 1900. Received of W. W. Wilson a release of mortgage securing a \$3,000 mortgage signed by Katharine Saum, recorded in book 189, page 126, Jasper Co., Iowa. Release to be held in escrow until notice of death of Wilson, then to be placed on record on evidence being produced that interest is paid to date of said death. Then record to be delivered to said Katharine. A. M. Harrah." After Mr. Wilson's death this release was properly recorded. On the same date of the transaction with Katharine Saum, Jay Saum received from the deceased the sum of \$3,000, and on the same date executed and delivered to the deceased a mortgage on real estate in Iowa, containing provisions substantially the same as those found in the mortgage given by Katharine Saum. The annual payments provided for in the Jay Saum mortgage were all made, the last payment having been made by a promissory note, and acknowledged by the deceased by a letter as follows: "Lincoln, Nebraska, May 22, 1900. Jay Saum, Esq., Dear Nephew: I found your letter of the 9th inst. awaiting me on my return from Kansas City and Wichita, enclosing your promissory note for \$170, payable on one year from May 1, 1900, with 6 per cent. interest, for which I am very thankful, as it closes up the interest to May 1, 1900. I inclose you a note, which please carefully preserve, as it may be useful some day." The deceased also executed a formal release of the Jay Saum mortgage, and on June 27, 1900, delivered the same to Mr. Harrah, taking from him a receipt substantially like the one given for the Katharine Saum release. This release was also recorded after the death of Mr. Wilson. No notes were taken by the deceased from Katharine or Jay Saum in connection with his transactions with them.

After Wilson's death, George E. Hibner was appointed and qualified as administrator of the estate, and at the time of the commencement of this action the administration of the estate had proceeded beyond the time appointed for the filing of claims against the estate, and it was determined that the personal property was sufficient to pay all indebtedness and the cost of administration, and thereupon Katharine Saum Howard, Jay Saum, Roxana Wilson, Nannie W. Fiscus and William W. Cook commenced an action for the partition of the real estate involved in this controversy; the remaining heirs and the administrator were named as defendants. Thomas C. Munger was appointed guardian *ad litem* for the defendant Mary A. Wilson, a person of unsound mind, and answered in her behalf. R. S. Mockett was appointed guardian *ad litem* for the defendant Gladys Glenn, and answered in her behalf. Foss Wilson, Zachariah T. Wilson, Burt Wilson, Minnie Wilson Royer, Joseph R. Wilson and Jennie L. Shuster also answered. In each of the answers above referred to it was alleged that William W. Wilson in his lifetime loaned to Nannie W. Fiscus the sum of \$5,000, to Katharine Saum Howard the sum of \$3,000 and to Jay Saum the sum of \$3,000. Copies of the mortgages given by them, together with a copy of the contract with Nannie W. Fiscus and her husband, were attached to and made a part of the answers, and it was alleged that no part of the principal or interest had been paid. They prayed for an accounting of the several sums due under the conditions of the mortgages, and that the amounts so found due be set off against the respective shares of Nannie W. Fiscus, Katharine Saum Howard and Jay Saum. Carrie W. Covert answered, but did not controvert the right of Nannie W. Fiscus, Katharine Saum Howard and Jay Saum to participate according to their shares. Nannie W. Fiscus, Katharine Saum Howard and Jay Saum replied, admitting the execution and delivery of the mortgages by each of them, and the contract by Nannie W. Fiscus; alleging that the sums received by them were

Fiscus v. Wilson.

gifts on the part of Wilson during his lifetime; that they had fully complied with all of the conditions named in the mortgages, and alleged that the heirs of William W. Wilson had no right in this action to obtain a decree establishing claims for money against other heirs; that no one but the administrator of the estate of Wilson could sue for, collect or enforce payment of any claim, or maintain an action therefor. They also challenged the jurisdiction of the court to adjust money claims between heirs, or to assign to heirs the residue of estates of deceased, alleging that such jurisdiction belonged exclusively to county courts. Upon the issues thus presented there was a trial, and the court found, among other things: "That during the lifetime of William W. Wilson he loaned money to each of the hereinafter named heirs, and that on the 23d day of September, 1898 (?), he loaned to Nannie W. Fiscus the sum of \$5,000, to Katharine Saum Howard the sum of \$3,000 on the 28th day of April, 1894, and to Jay Saum the sum of \$3,000 on the 28th day of April, 1894. That at the time of the loans so made to Nannie W. Fiscus, Katharine Saum Howard and Jay Saum, said persons above named executed and delivered to William W. Wilson bonds and mortgages to secure the payment of said sum of money so received by each of them, and the interest thereon. And the said mortgages or bonds so executed by the several parties to the said William W. Wilson, deceased, provided, among other things, that it was understood and agreed that the intention of the parties thereto was to secure to the said William W. Wilson the interest on said principal sums so advanced, during the term or period of the natural life of the said William W. Wilson, and that in case the interest was paid according to the terms thereof the principal sum was to remain to the said mortgagors, their heirs, executors, administrators and assigns, and that upon the death of the said William W. Wilson and the payment of interest as aforesaid the obligations or mortgages so executed by them to secure such money as herein described were to become null

and void and of no effect. That the said William W. Wilson, at or about the time of making such advancements as are herein described, executed releases of the said mortgages and satisfactions thereof, retaining the same in his possession or depositing the same in escrow to be delivered to the said parties to whom such advances had been made, conditioned upon the performance of the several conditions therein expressed; the more important of which was the payment of the interest by the several parties upon the amounts so advanced to them by the said Wilson at the time said interest became due up to the time of his death as aforesaid. And it was clearly the intention of the said William W. Wilson that the said advancements so made to the several parties herein, should be considered and was intended to constitute gifts to take effect upon his death, conditioned upon the payment of the interest as aforesaid. That said Jay Saum and Katharine Saum Howard had paid all interest due and owing upon their several obligations at the time the same became due, and at the time of the said William W. Wilson's death they were not in default of any of the conditions of their several obligations expressed. That the said Nannie W. Fiscus paid interest upon the amount so advanced to her by said William W. Wilson up to March 24, 1899, but had not paid or offered to pay any interest on said advancement subsequent to said date, and at the time of the death of the said William W. Wilson was in default of interest since the 24th day of March, 1899.

"Upon the foregoing facts the court finds the following conclusions of law: In the construction of the contracts between the several parties herein and now under consideration in this case, it is only necessary to consider, in determining the issues joined between the parties, the act to be performed and the manner of performing it. And such construction therefore must be adopted as will give effect to the provisions which carry out the intent of the contract made between the claimants herein and the deceased William W. Wilson. It does not seem to the court

necessary to pass upon the question, so far as the contract with Nannie W. Fiscus is concerned, as to whether that constituted a gift '*inter vivos*' or not. The payment of the advances were dependent upon the condition that interest should be paid on the sums so advanced until the death of the said Wilson. The said claimants having defaulted in the performance of this vital condition, it is clear to the court that, notwithstanding the findings heretofore made 'that it was the intention of the said Wilson that such advances should never be returned or repaid, provided the interest thereon should be paid until his death,' the said claimant, Nannie W. Fiscus, having failed to pay such interest, forfeited her rights under the contract. The court is therefore of the opinion that the said Nannie W. Fiscus should be charged with the sum so received. The only remaining question to be determined by the court in this case is the rights of Jay Saum and Katharine Saum Howard in the premises. They having complied with all of the conditions of said contract were entitled to the release of their several mortgages, and would be entitled to their share of said estate in addition to the advances so made to them. Therefore it is adjudged by the court that the defendant, Nannie W. Fiscus, be charged with the sum of \$5,000 from her distributive share of the estate of William W. Wilson, deceased, and that the advances made by the said William W. Wilson during his lifetime to the other heirs of said estate, as above found, be, and the same hereby are, decreed to be canceled and paid in accordance with the contract as hereinbefore found."

In the final disposition of the case in the district court the court allowed to Mr. Munger and Mr. Mockett, as guardians *ad litem*, certain attorneys' fees, and directed that such fees should be charged to the entire estate. Nannie W. Fiscus brings the case to this court by petition in error because of the judgment of the lower court charging her with the sum of \$5,000 received by her from the deceased in his lifetime, and directing that the same be

set off against her share of the estate. She also alleges error in the allowance of attorneys' fees to Messrs. Munger and Mockett and charging the same against the entire estate. Katharine Saum Howard and Jay Saum have filed cross-petitions in error, solely on the ground of the question of the attorneys' fees allowed to the guardians *ad litem*. Those of the defendants contesting the right of Katharine Saum Howard and Jay Saum to participate in the distribution without diminution filed cross-petitions in error because of the judgment allowing Katharine Saum Howard and Jay Saum to participate in the distribution without accounting for the controverted sums received by them from the deceased. They have, however, presented a motion to be permitted to dismiss their cross-petitions and to be allowed to proceed as by appeal. That motion is submitted with the merits of the controversy, and is allowed.

Omitting for the present the question of attorneys' fees, the contention of the parties in this court may be summarized as follows: The parties to the action who oppose the right of Nannie W. Fiscus, Katharine Saum Howard and Jay Saum to participate in the distribution without accounting for the sums received by them from the deceased now contend that the transaction of the deceased with reference to the sums received from him by those parties was an attempt on the part of the deceased to make a testamentary disposition of the sums so received. On the contrary, it is contended by the other side that the sums received by them should be treated as gifts *inter vivos*.

Taking up first the claim of an attempted testamentary disposition of the property of the deceased, we find ourselves unable to agree with that contention. A testamentary disposition of property involves the act or will of a single individual, a condition that does not here exist. The question involved is rather one arising out of contracts between parties in every respect possessing the capacity to contract. The rights of the parties must, therefore, depend upon their contract obligations, and in the

determination of those rights the contracts should be considered in the light of surrounding circumstances and the condition of the parties at the time of making them. Where the parties to a contract have, with a knowledge of its terms, given it a particular construction, such construction will generally be adopted by the courts in giving effect to its provisions. *Paxton v. Smith*, 41 Neb. 56; *Lawton v. Fonner*, 59 Neb. 214. Where both parties to a contract, regarding which there may be doubt or uncertainty as to the proper construction, by their acts under and with reference to it, and with knowledge of its terms, have given to such contract one and the same construction, it is generally a safe rule to adopt such construction. *State v. Board of County Commissioners*, 60 Neb. 566.

It becomes important, therefore, to consider the relations which these parties sustained toward the deceased, and the course which they pursued with reference to the contracts subsequent to the time of their execution. No one could read the record in this case without becoming convinced that Nannie W. Fiscus and Katharine Saum Howard were favorite nieces of the deceased, and that Jay Saum was a favorite nephew. He seems to have been a frequent visitor at their homes. His communications to them were of a kindly and endearing nature, and his every act in connection with the transactions involved showed a deep solicitude for their welfare and the ultimate benefits which they might enjoy from his bounty. There were frequent defaults in the payment of the instalments of interest, sometimes extending partially for a year or more after the time of payment, and no word of protest or act on the part of the deceased because of such default, and the fact that after such defaults had occurred he took the precaution to place the discharge of the mortgages, executed by these parties in his favor, in the hands of third persons, in connection with the statements made by him at the time they were so deposited, seems to show conclusively that it was never his intention to require a return of the principal sums given by him to these relatives. The intention of the

Fiscus v. Wilson.

deceased is fully expressed in his letter of July 10, 1900, to his niece, Katharine Saum Howard, wherein he says, in reference to the release left with Mr. Harrah: "If anything happens to me, you know where it is, and all you have to do is to pay up the interest to the date of my death and get the release." This letter gives force to the testimony of the witness Donaldson concerning the conversation had by him with the deceased, at the time of the delivery to him of the Nannie W. Fiscus release, wherein he states that the deceased informed him that he had given Nannie W. Fiscus the \$5,000; that his intention was to collect interest on it so long as he saw fit, but that he had given her the \$5,000. Upon a consideration of the evidence in the case, we are impelled to construe the contract between the deceased and these parties so as to give effect to the evident intention of the parties, and to hold that in the distribution of the estate neither Katharine Saum Howard, Jay Saum nor Nannie W. Fiscus should be charged with the principal of the sums received by them. They should, doubtless, be charged with interest on such sums, not already paid, up to the date of the death of Mr. Wilson.

As to the matter of attorneys' fees, counsel who were appointed guardian *ad litem* for their respective wards were entitled to have their fees allowed by the court and taxed as a part of the costs of the case. The only question is whether it would be equitable in this suit to require that item of costs to be paid by all of the parties in proportion to their interest. The general rule is that in a partition proceeding, where such proceeding is adversary, counsel fees may not be taxed against the entire estate, and while in such cases, where infants are parties, considerable latitude has been given to the discretion of trial courts, yet where, as in this case, the appointment is not a mere formal one, but is for the purpose of conducting the litigation on behalf of the wards, and such wards choose to make the proceeding an adversary one, we think the more equitable rule is to require them to stand on the same footing with other parties to the litigation, and, under the cir-

Spencer v. Wilson.

cumstances as they are here presented, we think the trial court erred in requiring such fees to be borne by all the parties in proportion to their interest.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court as to Nannie W. Fiscus, and in so far as it taxes attorneys' fees to be borne by all the parties, be reversed, and that the cause be remanded to the district court, with instructions to enter a decree in conformity with this opinion.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court as to Nannie W. Fiscus, and in so far as it taxes attorneys' fees to be borne by all the parties, is reversed, and the cause is remanded to the district court, with instructions to enter a decree in conformity with this opinion.

JUDGMENT ACCORDINGLY.

FRANK SPENCER v. OLIVER WILSON.

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1903. No. 13,902.

1. **Variance: REVIEW.** Where a party relies upon a variance between the pleadings and the proof to defeat a recovery, that question should be raised at some time during the progress of the trial, and, unless it is so raised and suggested to the trial court, it will not be considered on error in this court.
2. **Record examined,** and found to contain evidence to sustain the judgment.

ERROR to the district court for Boone county: JOHN R. HANNA, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

O. E. Spear, for plaintiff in error.

J. E. Wilson and *R. F. Williams*, *contra.*

JACKSON, C.

The defendant in error, herein styled the plaintiff, commenced an action in the district court for Boone county against the plaintiff in error, herein styled the defendant; his petition, omitting the caption, being as follows: "Plaintiff says that during the months of June, July, August and September, 1903, the defendant unlawfully and wrongfully, with force, broke and entered upon the wheat field of the plaintiff, situated on the west 30 acres of the southeast quarter of section 3, township 18, range 5 west, in Boone county, Nebraska, and then and there with his hogs trod down, ate up, and turned over shocks of wheat, causing the wheat to rot, and destroying the same to the amount of 125 bushels of wheat, of the value of 55 cents a bushel, amounting to \$68.75 damages to the plaintiff, which defendant converted to his own use; that the said wheat while in the shock was on the above described land, and that the plaintiff had the possession and control of the said land and wheat, and was the owner of the wheat; that the defendant entered thereon without the consent of the plaintiff, and damaged and destroyed the said wheat, and that the damage was not of the fault or negligence of the plaintiff; that the plaintiff has demanded pay for the said damages from the defendant, which the defendant refuses to pay. That the plaintiff is damaged to the amount of \$68.75 by the said defendant. Plaintiff asks judgment for \$68.75 damages, and interest at 7 per cent. from July 1, 1903, and costs of suit." The answer was a general denial. The parties waived a jury, and the case was tried to the court, who found for the plaintiff and assessed his damages at \$40, for which, with costs of suit, judgment was entered. The defendant prosecutes error to this court, and now urges that the damages are excessive, the judgment is contrary to law and is not sustained by sufficient evidence.

A considerable portion of the defendant's brief and argument is devoted to an attempt to demonstrate that there

is a variance between the pleadings and the proof; that the case stated in the petition is one in trespass, while the evidence tends only to support an action in trespass on the case. The record discloses that this question was at no time raised during the trial. The evidence of the plaintiff was offered and admitted without objection or exception. There was no attempt at the close of the plaintiff's case to nonsuit the plaintiff. The defendant proceeded with the introduction of evidence to controvert the case made by the plaintiff, and submitted his case upon the evidence so adduced. In *Knight v. Finney*, 59 Neb. 274, Mr. Justice HARRISON, who delivered the opinion of the court, in a discussion of the question of variance in that case, said:

"It is argued that there were fatal variances between the note in suit as pleaded and the one introduced in evidence. There were some differences, but none material to the issues, or the existence of which could in the least prejudice the rights of the complainant; moreover, the error, if any, in this regard, was in no manner the subject of notice, objection or exception in the trial court, and is not entitled to consideration here."

It is evident that in the trial court both parties placed a construction upon the pleadings different from the one now contended for by the defendant, and, that being true, where the case was fairly tried in the court below upon a theory adopted by both parties, they should not in a proceeding in error be permitted to adopt a different theory. If the defendant is correct in his construction of the petition, he should have raised that question in the court below, where the plaintiff would have been given an opportunity, upon proper terms, to remedy the defect in his pleading.

Concerning the question of the sufficiency of the evidence to support the judgment, there is evidence in the record sufficient to sustain the findings of the trial court. It may be true that the evidence would also have sustained a finding for the defendant, but in this court the case

Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Harley.

stands as though it had been tried to a jury, and a verdict rendered and judgment entered upon conflicting evidence; and adhering to the long established rule of this court the judgment will not be disturbed.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFLE, C., concurs. ALBERT, C., not sitting.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

CHICAGO, BURLINGTON & QUINCY RAILWAY COMPANY *ET*
AL. V. JOHN H. HARLEY.

FILED SEPTEMBER 20, 1905. No. 13,909.

1. Evidence examined, and held to present a state of facts from which different minds might reasonably draw different inferences.
2. Proximate Cause of Injury: QUESTION FOR JURY. Where the proximate cause of an injury depends upon a state of facts from which different minds might reasonably draw different inferences, it is a proper question for the consideration of a jury. *Lincoln Traction Co. v. Heller*, 72 Neb. 127.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: ALBERT J. CORNISH, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

J. W. Deweese and Frank E. Bishop, for plaintiffs in error.

A. W. Field, contra.

JACKSON, C.

This is a proceeding in error to reverse a judgment of the district court for Lancaster county. The defendant in error, hereafter styled the plaintiff, sued the plaintiffs in

error, hereafter styled the defendants, on account of a personal injury which he claims he sustained by reason of certain negligent acts of the defendants; the allegations of his petition material to the inquiry being: "On or about the 27th day of August, 1902, the said defendant railway company and the said defendant John Kreps, its foreman, negligently and carelessly placed the said handcar, with shovels and tools and the coats and dinner pails of the said workmen loaded thereon, in the said road near the track, and on the south side thereof, thereby negligently and wrongfully obstructing the road at said crossing, and so placing the same that it was impossible for any one desiring to use said crossing to pass over it. The workmen of the said defendant company, under the direction of the said Kreps, left said handcar so standing in the road and, at the time of the injuries herein complained of, had proceeded eastward along the railroad track about 300 feet, where they were at work. In the forenoon of said 27th day of August, 1902, the plaintiff John H. Harley, with one Frank Davey, was traveling along the public highway from Malcolm, and attempted to cross the railroad track at the crossing above described. The rails of said track at the point of said crossing were about five feet higher than the ground where said handcar had been left, and about five feet higher than the roadway along the north side of said track where the plaintiff and said Davey were driving. Upon reaching the right of way, at a point about 20 feet north of the defendant's track, said Davey, who was driving the horse, noticed an obstruction in the roadway on the south side of the track, and, placing the horse in charge of the plaintiff, left the vehicle and went forward to investigate. About this time the defendant Kreps, with the workmen, came to the crossing, and finding it impossible for the team to pass because of the obstruction by the handcar, on his volition and without request of the plaintiff or of said Davey, proceeded, with the assistance of said workmen, to remove said handcar from the roadway and place the same on the track. Plaintiff alleges that said

Kreps and said workmen moved the handcar along the roadway and upon said track in a careless, negligent and wrongful manner, so that the horse in charge of the plaintiff became frightened and unmanageable, because of the moving of said handcar along the roadway and upon the tracks, and ran eastward along the right of way of the defendant company, and at a point about 140 feet east of said crossing overturned the vehicle, throwing the plaintiff out, breaking his leg and rendering him unconscious. Plaintiff alleges that the horse in his charge at said time was of gentle disposition and safe for driving purposes, was accustomed to be driven near railroads, and was not frightened by the operation of cars along and upon railroad tracks; but that, because of the unusual sight of the handcar left standing in the road, and because of the negligent manner in which the same was moved along the road, and because of the unusual noise caused by said moving and the rattling of the tools, utensils and pails on said handcar, said horse became frightened and ran away." The defendants filed separate answers, in substance denying the allegations of the petition, and alleging that the injury received by the plaintiff was by reason of the running away of the horse, and that it was due to the carelessness and negligence of the plaintiff, and without fault or negligence on the part of the defendants. Plaintiff's reply was a general denial. There was a trial to the court and jury, resulting in a finding and judgment for the plaintiff. The defendants prosecute error to this court.

Many assignments of error are suggested in the petition, but, in the brief of the defendants and at the submission of the case in this court, counsel have suggested that they prefer to submit the case on the merits of the question of liability, rather than upon any technical error that would cause a reversal and a new trial, and that the facts upon which they rely for a disposition of the case, finally and without a new trial, are the facts that are admitted and sworn to by the plaintiff himself. We have examined the bill of exceptions and find competent evidence tending to

establish the following facts: The plaintiff is a resident of the city of Lincoln, where he is employed as secretary of a life insurance company. The company have agents at Malcolm, this state, and on the 27th day of August, 1902, the plaintiff was at that point for the purpose of assisting the company's agents in closing up some business they there had in view. One of the agents was a Mr. Davey, at whose home the plaintiff was a guest. Davey owned a farm about one mile distant from the town of Malcolm, of which a small tract was cut off from the balance of the farm by a creek, and the tract so cut off was accessible only by a private crossing over the right of way of the defendant company. The company's right of way was 50 feet wide on each side of the center of its track. At the point where the private crossing was located there was a fill of some four or five feet for the purpose of the company's roadbed, with borrow ditches on either side, and for the purpose of the crossing the company had built culverts over the borrow ditches, and Davey had built a grade from the culverts to the top of the fill. That portion of the driveway over the crossing that was used for travel was about ten feet wide, and on each side sunflowers had grown up as high or higher than a buggy top. The crossing opened into the public highway on one side and Davey's field on the other. The plaintiff was invited to accompany Davey's son to that portion of his farm reached by means of this private crossing, and hold the horse while he, Davey, procured some potatoes. The conveyance used on the occasion was a top buggy drawn by a single horse, known to be gentle and accustomed to be driven in that locality. He entered the buggy and accompanied Davey. They drove along the public highway, parallel with the defendant company's right of way, until the private crossing was reached. Here they started across, when, about half way between the railroad and the public highway, they discovered a handcar on the other side of the railroad track. Davey left the carriage in charge of the plaintiff and went across the track to see whether the handcar would interfere with

their crossing over the railroad. When Davey reached the car he informed the plaintiff that it would be necessary to remove the car from the crossing before they could pass over. The section foreman and crew of the defendant company in charge of the car were engaged in some repairs along the track at some distance away, and observing the presence of Davey and the plaintiff at the crossing, left their work and approached the crossing with the view of removing the car. On the handcar was clothing of the section crew, together with their dinner buckets. As the car was moved forward onto the track the dinner buckets rattled, and the horse, then being held by the plaintiff himself, who was alone in the carriage, being frightened, started to back up, the buggy was cramped, and the plaintiff, fearful of being overturned, undertook to control the horse and keep its head toward the car; but the horse became unmanageable and started to run down the defendant company's right of way. Plaintiff attempted to rein it back to the public highway. In doing so the buggy was overturned, the plaintiff was thrown to the ground and sustained a serious injury. The plaintiff had never before visited the place where the injury was received, and was therefore entirely unfamiliar with the crossing and surroundings. It was the custom of the section crew of the defendant company to leave the handcar where it was on this occasion, when at work in that vicinity. The car was on the wagon track and was so situated as to obstruct travel.

It is contended by the defendants that the leaving of the handcar at this crossing was not the proximate cause of the injury, and that, even though it may be held to have been an act of negligence on the part of the railroad company to have left its car on this crossing, still the plaintiff cannot recover, for the reason that the plaintiff himself was negligent in not permitting the horse to turn away from the object at which it was affrighted, and that the injury which he sustained was the direct result of his own negligent course in undertaking to keep the horse with its

face toward such object, and that he could readily have avoided the danger by turning the horse back toward the public highway. The question does not arise out of the ordinary use of a railroad track at a crossing, such as the operation of trains and handcars, or of the temporary obstruction to travel growing out of such use, but it involves the right of a railroad company, in the first instance, to remove a handcar from its track and place it upon a crossing in such a way as to obstruct travel, as well as the course subsequently pursued by the plaintiff when he found the highway so obstructed. There is no distinction in principle between a public and private crossing, in so far as the questions involved in this case are concerned; and, unless the plaintiff's own negligence was the proximate cause of his injury, then the case ought, to some extent, to be determined by the right of the railroad company to place its handcar upon the crossing as it did in this case.

In *Vars v. Grand Trunk R. Co.*, 23 U. C. C. P. 143, it appears that employees of the defendant removed a handcar from the track onto the public highway and went away and left it. "The plaintiff drove past in his carriage, and his horse, shying at the car, ran away, threw the plaintiff out and severely injured him. *Held*, that there was evidence of negligence to go to the jury, in thus placing the car on the highway, for which defendants were responsible; and a verdict for the plaintiff was upheld." In that case it was said by the court: "It was a matter entirely for the jury to say whether the vehicle in question was one calculated to cause the injury, and whether the place in which it was left was, or was not, a fit and proper place for it, so as to render the defendants guilty of negligence in so placing it."

In *Sherman S. & S. R. Co. v. Bridges*, 16 Tex. Civ. App. 64, 40 S. W. 536, the facts were as follows: Plaintiff's wife approached defendant's railroad crossing, driving a horse which she had driven for several years and which had been found to be gentle. Defendant's employees had

left a handcar loaded with tools in such a position as to obstruct the highway, and the horse became frightened at the obstruction, and, after the employees had moved the handcar off the crossing, the woman urged the horse across the tracks, and it then ran away and she was killed. *Held*, that she was not guilty of contributory negligence, and that obstructing a highway, by allowing a handcar filled with tools and surrounded by employees dressed in white and blue garments to remain thereon, is such negligence as will render defendant liable for the death of one whose horse was frightened at the obstruction. In that case the crossing was a private crossing.

In *Atchison, T. & S. F. R. Co. v. Morrow*, 4 Kan. App. 199, 45 Pac. 956, it was said: "Where section-hands, in repairing a railroad track, place a handcar, with tools, buckets and coats thereon, by the side of the track, and within the margin of a highway, near the traveled road, in such a position as naturally or manifestly to be calculated from its appearance and situation to frighten horses of ordinary gentleness and broken to travel along the same, and a traveler on the highway, riding a horse of ordinary gentleness and broken to travel along the road, and exercising ordinary care and prudence, attempts to cross the railroad track, and in passing said handcar his horse is so frightened that he becomes unmanageable, and in his fright throws the rider to the ground and thereby injures him, it would be such negligence on the part of the employees of the railroad company as would render the company liable for damages sustained thereby."

And in *Ohio & M. R. Co. v. Troubridge*, 126 Ind. 391, it is found: Where a woman was thrown and injured by her horse taking fright at a handcar, which two minutes before, and while she was approaching in full view of the section men, had been left by them standing ten feet from the center of the highway, the evidence of negligence proximately causing the injury is sufficient to sustain a verdict against the company.

In the light of these authorities, and taking into con-

sideration the ordinary and rightful use of crossings over railroads and the obligations of railroad companies with reference thereto, we conclude that the jury were justified in finding that the placing of the defendant company's car on the highway in such a manner as to obstruct travel was an act of negligence. It certainly was not such ordinary use of the crossing as was contemplated in the discussion of *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Roberts*, 3 Neb. (Unof.) 425, cited by defendants.

The disposition of the case, then, must turn upon the question of whether or not the course pursued by the plaintiff was so negligent in character as to justify the court in determining from the evidence produced in his own behalf that he was not entitled to recover. Counsel for the defendants have presented a very able and exhaustive argument in support of the defendants' contention that it was. It is based, however, upon an assumption of fact with reference to which the jury evidently found against the defendant company. It is true that this assumption of fact is supported by the testimony of the defendants' witnesses, and is, in effect, that, when the plaintiff and Davey discovered the handcar on the crossing, they had just started to turn from the public highway onto the roadway leading over the crossing, and that, when the attempt was made to remove the handcar and the horse became frightened, the horse was so situated and might readily have been turned down the public highway and thus avoided all danger. With reference to the fact, however, about the location of the horse and conveyance at the time the horse was frightened, there is a sharp conflict in the evidence, both the plaintiff and Davey having testified that, before they discovered the car and stopped the horse, they had covered about half the distance between the public highway and the railroad track, and had proceeded to the culvert over the borrow ditch on that side of the railroad track from which they were approaching the car. It is evident, as we have already intimated, that the jury found the fact to be as testified to by the

plaintiff and the witness Davey. Furthermore, we are asked to determine this controversy upon the fact as admitted and testified to by the plaintiff. Here then is the situation. The plaintiff is alone in the buggy on the driveway, the open part of which is some ten feet in width. He is surrounded by sunflowers on either side as high or higher than the buggy top. The horse becomes frightened from the appearance of the handcar with clothing thereon, and the noise of the dinner buckets as the car is being pushed forward upon the railroad track some 25 feet away. The horse in its fright starts to back. The buggy was cramped and the plaintiff was fearful of being overturned. What should he have done under the circumstances? There is no time for mature deliberation. He attempted to control the horse and keep him with his face toward the object at which he was frightened. It is evident that different minds might draw different conclusions as to whether this act of the plaintiff was a negligent one, and the rule is well settled that, where the proximate cause of an injury depends upon a state of facts from which different minds might reasonably draw different inferences, the question is one for a jury, and the finding of a jury under such circumstances should not be disturbed.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE, C., concurs. ALBERT, C., not sitting.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

WILLIAM T. TURLEY V. STATE OF NEBRASKA.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 13,663.

1. **Jury: QUALIFICATIONS: WAIVER.** The objection that a juror is disqualified because of having been convicted of a felony may be waived. A party who does not inquire in regard to the matter on *voir dire* examination of the juror, nor object to the juror on that ground until after the trial, will be held to have waived the objection.
2. **Homicide: SELF-DEFENSE: EVIDENCE.** Upon trial of an information for murder, and a plea of self-defense, it is competent to show that the deceased was at the time in the lawful and peaceful possession of the premises where the homicide occurred; and for that purpose it is not error to allow, under proper instructions from the court, the introduction of evidence of a written lease conveying to the deceased the right of possession.
3. **Experts: EVIDENCE: REVIEW.** Matters of common observation and matters upon which jurymen are as capable of forming an opinion as are physicians and surgeons are not matters for expert medical testimony. But it is not necessarily reversible error to allow a witness to testify to a truism with which all intelligent men are presumed to be acquainted, nor is it in all cases reversible error to allow a witness, over objection, to testify to a proposition of law, or a fact of science or nature which is a matter of common knowledge.
4. **Instruction: SELF-DEFENSE.** It is not error to instruct the jury in a trial for murder that, "when competent evidence has been introduced tending to prove that the defendant acted in self-defense, it is incumbent upon the state to prove to you beyond a reasonable doubt that he did not so act."
5. ———: ———. One who is violently assaulted may use such means for self-protection from the assault as would appear to an ordinarily reasonable and prudent man similarly situated to be necessary under the circumstances. An instruction which tells the jury that, if under such circumstances he uses "sound reason" in determining what is necessary for self-protection, it is all that is required of him, is inaccurate, but is not erroneous, requiring a reversal of the judgment, if it is coupled with another instruction which tells the jury that there must be an acquittal if under such circumstances the defendant had reasonable ground to believe and did believe that there was a design to take his life or to do him great bodily harm.
6. ———: ———. In a trial for murder, with evidence of self-defense,

when it appears that the accused was a trespasser or was otherwise violating the law at the time of the homicide, and there is evidence tending to show that the killing was done in justifiable self-protection from a vicious and dangerous assault by the deceased, it is error to instruct the jury that, "when a man without fault, in the lawful pursuit of his duties, is attacked," he may defend himself against such attack. A trespasser may defend himself against an unlawful and dangerous assault. But the whole charge upon this subject must be construed together; and if in one instruction the jury without such qualifications are plainly told that "where, from the nature of the attack, there is reasonable ground to believe that there is a design to take his life or to do him great bodily harm, and the party attacked does so believe, then the shooting of the assailant under such circumstances will be excusable or justifiable," it is not reversible error to tell the jury in another instruction that the defendant will under such circumstances also be justifiable if he is himself without fault and in the lawful pursuit of his duties.

7. ———: ———. Although it appears that the deceased was at the time of the homicide guilty of a technical assault upon the accused, it would not be lawful to use more force than necessary for self-protection from that assault; and, if the jury should find that the accused was a trespasser at the time, it would be his duty to retire from his assailant, if by so doing he could avoid all danger from the assault. To kill the assailant under such circumstances would not be justifiable. A request to instruct that "the law does not require the defendant to flee from his assailant" was properly refused as misleading.
8. **New Trial: NEWLY DISCOVERED EVIDENCE.** It is not error to refuse a new trial on the ground of newly discovered evidence, if the proposed evidence might with reasonable diligence have been produced upon the trial or is cumulative.

ERROR to the district court for Hall county: JAMES N. PAUL, JUDGE. Affirmed.

Hamer & Hamer, Harrison & Prince, and J. F. Walker,
for plaintiff in error.

Norris Brown, Attorney General, William T. Thompson,
R. R. Horth, W. H. Thompson and C. G. Ryan, contra.

SENGWICK, J.

In March, 1903, one Norman T. Bliss was shot and killed by the defendant in Hall county, Nebraska. The defend-

ant, who is plaintiff in error here, was prosecuted in the district court upon an information which charged him with murder in the first degree. He admits that he shot the deceased twice with a shotgun, and that this caused the death of the deceased. He alleges that what he did was done in self-defense. Upon trial of this issue he was found guilty of murder in the second degree, and was sentenced to a term in the penitentiary for 17 years.

1. There appears to be some complaint made in the voluminous brief filed that the allegations of the information are not sufficient to support the conviction, and we find that this objection was made upon the trial, and that the point is preserved in the record. It is difficult to determine from the brief upon what ground this objection rests, and upon examination of the information it appears to be in the usual form and to contain allegations of all the facts necessary to constitute the crime of which the defendant was convicted.

2. There is also a contention in the brief that the evidence is not sufficient to support the verdict. The defendant had leased the farm adjoining the premises occupied by the deceased, and the day before the shooting occurred had brought his family to the farm, which he had leased. It appears that the deceased did not reside upon the premises occupied by him, but on the morning of the homicide he, with his young son, took some cattle and other property there, and soon after their arrival discovered that some trespassing pigs were destroying corn which was piled in an inclosure near the house upon the premises. They drove these animals away some considerable distance through the stubble fields and corn-stalks, and, while doing so, chased them with pitchforks and killed two small pigs of about 25 pounds each. There was evidence from which the jury were plainly justifiable in finding that these animals belonged to one Barnhart, from whom the defendant had leased the place that he occupied, and that the defendant had, by authority of the owner, assumed the care of the animals, and that the premises were so situated that

the defendant, from the house where he was at the time, could see the deceased and his son chase the animals and apparently using violence against them, and that the defendant thereupon took his shotgun, which was loaded with two shells, and, together with two boys, one being his son, who accompanied him, left his house and went in the general direction of the deceased and his son, who were chasing the animals. The two parties were so near to each other that an altercation or conversation ensued, and thereupon the shooting occurred which resulted in the death of the deceased.

On the one hand, it is contended by the state, and there is evidence tending to support the contention, that it was the chasing and killing of these animals by the deceased which caused the defendant to leave his house; that his purpose was either to prevent further injury to the animals or to punish the deceased; that from the time he left the house he walked rapidly toward the deceased, and that the deceased, seeking to avoid contact with him, started for the house upon the premises which he occupied, and that the defendant changed his course from time to time, so as to intercept the deceased, and that finally, when they came in contact, the defendant asked the deceased whose pigs he was chasing, and was answered that they were Mr. Barnhart's pigs; that he then asked the deceased how many of them he had killed, and was told not to ask too many questions; that, when this altercation began, the defendant was in the field upon the premises occupied by and in the possession of the deceased, and the deceased was in the public highway adjoining these premises; that thereupon the deceased passed through the wire fence into his field, and ordered the defendant to get off from his premises, and then started toward his home, walking in a general direction away from the defendant; that the defendant thereupon followed the deceased for a few steps, and then, being a short distance, perhaps two rods, from the deceased, the defendant discharged his gun toward the deceased, striking him in the arm and back, and wounding him; that there-

upon the deceased turned toward the defendant, shouting, "Don't shoot! Don't shoot!" and the defendant immediately shot the deceased in the breast, killing him instantly. On the other hand, it is contended by the defendant that he and the two boys who accompanied him left his house with the purpose of hunting; that they could not see the deceased and his son from the house where they started, and knew nothing of their whereabouts until they had hunted for some time in the open fields; that the meeting between the deceased and the defendant was not sought by the defendant, but was accidental; and that, when they met, the defendant inquired of the deceased whose pigs those were that he was driving, and was answered by the deceased that he did not know; that he then inquired how many he had killed, whereupon the deceased, being greatly enraged, passed through the wire fence, and with violent and abusive language and threats, rushed upon the defendant with a fork, which the deceased held in his hands; that the defendant said to the deceased, "Stop! or I will have to shoot," and, the deceased not stopping, but continuing his assault, the defendant first shot him in the arm, and afterwards through the body, which caused his death; and that this shooting was necessary on the part of the defendant to defend himself against the assault of the deceased. There was a large volume of evidence taken; many witnesses were examined; other facts more or less material were shown. The issue thus presented was peculiarly one for the jury to pass upon, and we are entirely satisfied that their verdict should not be disturbed for want of evidence to support it.

3. After the trial was completed, it was discovered that one of the jurors had formerly been convicted of felony in the district court for Hall county, and had served a term in the penitentiary, pursuant to a sentence imposed upon that conviction. The sentence was on the 3d day of March, 1886, and was for the term of one year. The convict was allowed two months for good behavior, pursuant to the statute, and was discharged on the 5th

day of January, 1887. The evidence shows that in a fire which occurred at the penitentiary the records of his discharge were destroyed. There is a transcript of the record kept in the office of the governor, from which it appears that he was allowed two months for good behavior, and it also appears that no copy of the order for his discharge was preserved in the records in the governor's office. It is shown that the custom was in such cases to insert in the order for his discharge a provision declaring the convict to be restored to all his civil rights in all respects the same as though a pardon had been granted. No reason or precedent is shown in the briefs for declaring this man now to be deprived of his civil rights, and, even if we were constrained to so hold, we do not think that the objection to this juror would require a reversal of the judgment. Great latitude is allowed the defendant upon the *voir dire* examination to enable him to ascertain whether there is any ground for objecting to the juror. He cannot waive an objection of this nature, and, after taking his chances of an acquittal before the jury selected, insist upon an objection which he should have raised upon the impaneling of the jury, and, if he makes no effort to ascertain whether a juror offered is qualified to sit, he must be held to have waived the objection. Any other rule would introduce uncertainty into a jury trial which would be intolerable.

4. The shooting occurred, as before stated, upon premises which were in the possession of the deceased. Objection was made to the introduction of a lease of these premises to the deceased. This lease was introduced only for the purpose of showing the deceased's right of possession, and the court in its instructions expressly so stated to the jury. It was of course competent to show that the deceased was in the peaceable possession of these premises, from which it was contended on the part of the state he had ordered the defendant at the time of the shooting. It may be that the introduction of this lease was unnecessary; that the other evidence sufficiently

showed the actual possession and control of the premises to be in the deceased. No apparent prejudice to the defendant resulted from its introduction; none is pointed out in the briefs, and we are not able to see that the defendant was prejudiced thereby.

5. It will be remembered that an important question that was disputed upon the trial was whether the deceased at the time of the shooting was making or threatening to make an assault upon the defendant, or was, on the other hand, seeking to avoid a conflict with him. It was shown by the position of the body that the deceased, when shot, did not fall toward the defendant, but in an opposite direction. Dr. George Roeder was called as a witness by the state, and qualified as an expert physician and surgeon. After testifying at large to an examination of the body and his qualifications as an expert, he was asked this question: "Doctor, assuming that a man received a charge of shot in the right chest, the charge you describe as entering the right chest of Mr. Bliss, when he was standing still, and being about twenty-five feet distant from the person who shot him, do you know in what direction he would fall?" and answered, "Yes, sir." He was then asked in what direction. Objection to this question was sustained, and it was not answered. The witness was then asked if he had had military service or special study as a military surgeon, and answered that he had, and then was asked this question: "Now, doctor, assuming that a man was charging forward at a rapid gait, and would receive a gunshot wound, like the one you have described as entering the right chest of Mr. Bliss, being some twenty-five feet distant from the person shooting him, do you know what direction he would fall?" and answered, "Yes, sir." He was then asked: "You may state in what direction he would fall." His answer was: "He would fall in the direction of the momentum of the body at the time of the shooting." A motion was made to strike out the answer, for the reason, among other things, that he bases his answer on common knowledge of facts

Turley v. State.

that are supposed to be understood by everybody, and not in the line of surgery. This motion was overruled and an exception taken. These rulings of the court are now assigned for error.

It seems clear that the objection to the question was well taken. Matters of common observation and matters upon which jurymen are as capable of forming opinions as medical men are not matters for expert testimony. 2 Elliott, Evidence, sec. 1,094. The answer which the witness made to this question shows that he did not regard it or answer it as a medical question, and it cannot be properly so regarded. The testimony therefore should have been excluded; but it is not pointed out in the brief in what manner the defendant could have been prejudiced by this answer. It had already been shown conclusively in the evidence, not only by this witness but by others, that from the nature of the wound the deceased would have no control whatever of his motions after receiving the wound. That being the case, we take it that the proposition that a human body, when suddenly deprived of all self-control, will fall in the direction of the momentum of the body is a truism with which all intelligent men must be presumed to be acquainted. This answer of the witness therefore could not be prejudicial to the defendant. When Dr. Smith was testifying, he was asked substantially the same question. It was objected, among other things, that "it is a matter to be determined by facts and physics, supposed to be familiar to everybody, and further that it would depend upon whether the force of the charge was sufficient to overcome the force presented by the body. * * * The body would keep on moving in the direction it was going by receiving a bullet or shot wound, for the momentum of the body is so much greater than the momentum of the shot, being 2,500 times heavier." The question was then modified as follows: "Then, you say the body would go on in the direction in which it was moving at the time the shot was received?" There was no objection to this question, and the witness answered:

"Yes, sir." Thus the defendant by his counsel stated as a matter of law the substance of the witness's answer. The witness was not allowed to state his belief as to whether the deceased was standing still or was advancing toward the defendant at the time of the shooting, but merely stated that which the defendant insisted was a matter within the common knowledge of all. The receiving of this evidence could not be prejudicial error, requiring a reversal of the judgment.

Some other objections were made to the ruling of the court in receiving and excluding evidence, but we do not find any errors in that regard. The witness Earl Bliss, a young son of the deceased, testified that at the time of the first shot the deceased was going away from the defendant, and it appeared that the second shot took effect directly in the breast of the deceased. This witness was asked: "Do you know of anything that made your father turn around toward Turley, so that he faced him?" And it is now urged that the court erred in refusing to allow this question to be answered. Also, the same witness was asked: "Now, then, if your father was only five feet west of Mr. Turley when he stood there in the road, and as he came through the fence, I want to know how he got to be two rods west of him?" The witness was not allowed to answer this question, and the ruling, it is contended, was erroneous. Both of these questions are in their nature argumentative, and, taken in connection with the questions that preceded them, were clearly so. Defendant's attorneys were allowed great latitude in the cross-examination of this witness, and the matters apparently aimed at in these questions were thoroughly investigated. It was clearly within the discretion of the trial court to exclude such questions. The other complaints upon the exclusion of evidence are of a similar nature and do not require further discussion.

6. It was claimed that the tracks made by the parties at the place of the shooting, as seen by witnesses immediately after the shooting, indicated that the deceased had

Tully v. State.

walked along the fence in the field for some distance, and had been followed by the defendant immediately before the shooting took place. It was sought to identify these tracks as those made by the deceased and by the defendant, respectively, and the witness, who had examined them soon after the shooting and had described the boots worn by the deceased at the time of the shooting, was asked this question: "You may state how they compare as to size, Mr. Booda, the tracks you saw along the fence and the boots you saw on the dead man's body," and answered: "I thought they compared all right, although I never measured them." In *Russell v. State*, 62 Neb. 512, and *Clough v. State*, 7 Neb. 320, it is said that to allow a witness to tell the jury his belief as to who made certain tracks was to invade the province of the jury, and it is insisted that the ruling complained of comes within the principle established in those cases. We do not so regard it. The witness was not asked whether the boots of the deceased made the tracks in question. He was asked to state how they compared, and that only as to size. The effect of this testimony was no different than if the witness had testified to the size of each, matters which were within his knowledge, and not mere matters of opinion. This objection we think was properly overruled.

7. Nearly all of the 31 instructions given by the court upon its own motion are complained of. As to the most of these instructions there seems to be no ground of complaint whatever. They are, so far as we can see, clear and satisfactory in their statement of the law to the jury. Some of the objections, however, will be noticed. The fourth and fifth instructions given by the court to the jury are as follows: Instruction numbered 4: "You are further instructed that a reasonable doubt is an actual, substantial doubt arising from the evidence or want of evidence in the case." Instruction numbered 5: "By the term reasonable doubt, as herein used, is not meant a mere caprice, conjecture or groundless possibility. It is an actual, substantial doubt, based on a reason arising either

from the evidence or want of evidence in the case, and sufficient to cause an ordinarily prudent man to hesitate and refuse to act in the most important affairs and concerns of life. The guilt of an accused person is proved beyond a reasonable doubt when, upon the entire comparison and consideration of all the evidence, the minds of the jurors are in that condition that they can say from the evidence they have an abiding conviction to a moral certainty of the truth of the charge." It is possible that we do not understand counsel in the discussion of these instructions. *Cowan v. State*, 22 Neb. 519, and *Carr v. State*, 23 Neb. 749, which are cited, are not in point, as the instructions held erroneous in these cases defined a reasonable doubt as one having a reason for its basis derived from the testimony, and for the having of which the jury can give a reason. It was held that to require the jury to give a reason for the doubt, or else disregard it, was erroneous, and it was also held that the basis of doubt might be derived from a want of evidence as well as from the testimony actually given; but the instruction in this case is not subject to criticism on either ground. It is said in the brief that "a reason for the doubt is never necessary," and it seems to be insisted that it was error to instruct the jury that a reasonable doubt must be based on a reason arising either from the evidence or want of evidence in the case. We do not think that this proposition calls for a discussion, even in so important a case as this. There is not much difference between the expression "reasonable" and the expression "based on reason." We do not discover any prejudicial error in these two instructions.

8. In the next instruction the jury were told that, "when competent evidence has been introduced tending to prove that he did so act (in self-defense), it is incumbent upon the state to prove to you beyond a reasonable doubt that he did not so act, and if, upon a consideration of all the evidence in this case, you entertain a reasonable doubt as to whether the defendant acted in self-defense, it is your

duty to give the defendant the benefit of the doubt and acquit him." It is objected that this instruction requires the defendant to furnish some proof that he acted in self-defense. There are two sufficient answers to this objection. In the first place, the instruction does not require any proof from the defendant, but informs the jury that when competent evidence has been introduced upon that point, that is, when there is any competent evidence in the case tending to show that the defendant acted in self-defense, whether introduced by the defendant or by the state, the burden of proof is then upon the state. The second reason is that the defendant requested the court to give an instruction in the identical language now complained of.

9. The nineteenth instruction given by the court is as follows: "You are instructed that if you believe, from the evidence as explained in these instructions, that at the time the said defendant is alleged to have shot the said Norman T. Bliss the circumstances surrounding the defendant were such as in sound reason would justify or induce in his mind an honest belief that he was in danger of receiving from the said Norman T. Bliss great bodily harm, and that defendant did so believe, and that the defendant in doing what he then did was acting from the instinct of self-preservation, then he is not guilty, although there may in fact have been no real or actual danger." It is doubtful whether one who is the subject of a vicious assault is required in all cases to use sound reason in determining what he should do. If he acts as an ordinarily reasonable and prudent man would act under such circumstances, it is, perhaps, all that would be required of him. The language in this instruction, then, is not to be commended. This instruction follows one in which it is stated that "where, from the nature of the attack, there is reasonable ground to believe that there is a design to take his life or to do him great bodily harm, and the party attacked does so believe, then the shooting of the assailant under such circumstances will be excusable or jus-

tifiable." We cannot believe that the jury were misled upon consideration of these two instructions together. A number of instructions were requested by the defendant upon this point, but no request was made for an explanation as to what was meant by sound reason.

10. The objection made to instruction numbered 18, given by the court upon its own motion, is of a more serious character. That instruction is as follows: "You are instructed that in this case the defendant, William T. Turley, sets up the plea of necessary self-defense. The rule of law on this subject of self-defense is, where a man without fault, in the lawful pursuit of his duties, is attacked, and where, from the nature of the attack, there is reasonable ground to believe that there is a design to take his life or to do him great bodily harm, and the party attacked does so believe, then the shooting of the assailant under such circumstances will be excusable or justifiable, although it should afterwards appear that no injury was intended and no real danger existed." In this case the jury may well have found from the evidence that the defendant was not without fault. According to his own evidence he was engaged in hunting on the Sabbath day, and he was a trespasser upon the land occupied by the deceased. It was admitted by all parties that he was not "in the lawful pursuit of his duties." In *Hans v. State*, 72 Neb. 288, an instruction similar to this, but omitting the words "without fault," was held to be prejudicially erroneous. In that case there was evidence tending to show that the defendant was a trespasser at the time of the homicide, and was therefore acting unlawfully. The instruction there complained of was followed with a more particular instruction as to the right of self-defense, but this made that right depend upon the existence of a non-essential fact which was in dispute. In the case at bar circumstances in evidence were of such a character as to make the fault of this instruction still more apparent. The conclusion is unavoidable that the instruction was not applicable to the facts in the case. We think, however, that this error is not of

such a character as to require a reversal of the judgment. In the next instruction, which is copied in another paragraph of this opinion, the court states the law of self-defense and applies it to the facts in this case, and tells the jury plainly that, if certain facts exist, the defendant is not guilty. The propositions that the defendant was without fault, and was in the lawful pursuit of his duties at the time of the killing, are not included as necessary in order to require his acquittal on the ground of self-defense. This is a positive statement that they must acquit the defendant if the necessary elements exist which are recited in the instruction, although it should not appear that he was without fault or was in the lawful pursuit of his duties. The statement in the instruction complained of that the shooting of his assailant would be excusable if these unnecessary elements existed in connection with others which were necessary do not contradict the positive statements of the nineteenth instruction, and could not have misled the jury. It appears to us that these two instructions, taken together, although each of them contains language that is not to be commended, do, if properly construed, and as they must have been construed by the jury, contain a correct statement of the law as applied to this case. Instructions that were explicit, and more fully explained the law in view of the peculiar facts of this case, would have been proper, and no doubt would have been given, if requested.

11. The defendant requested the court to instruct the jury as follows: "You are instructed that if you find from the evidence that the deceased Norman T. Bliss assaulted defendant, Turley, with a pitchfork, then the law does not require that defendant Turley flee from his assailant, but he might stand his ground and meet force with force." If the abstract proposition of law embraced in this instruction is correct, still we do not think that the refusal to so instruct the jury in this case is reversible error. The jury might have thought from the evidence that the deceased was entirely justifiable in ordering the defendant from his premises, but that the conduct of the deceased in insisting

upon the defendant's leaving his premises was such as would amount to a technical assault, and yet this instruction would induce them to suppose that under such circumstances defendant was justifiable in killing the deceased, although he had no reasonable ground to believe that he was in danger of serious injury, and notwithstanding that the use he made of the deadly weapon in his hands was entirely unnecessary to save himself from injury. The instruction as it was offered was not applicable to the facts in the case as contended for by either party, and might have been very misleading to the jury.

12. Exception is taken to some of the language used by counsel for the state in the closing argument to the jury. Some of these expressions are copied in the record and are discussed at large in the briefs. The main objection taken seems to be not so much to any particular statement or form of expression used as to the general character of the argument. We cannot, of course, present the argument complained of here. It is sufficient to say that we do not find therein any serious violation of the rights of the defendant.

Another point urged in the brief and discussed quite at large is that the court erred in not granting a new trial on the ground of newly discovered evidence. There was a large mass of evidence produced upon this point on the hearing of the motion, and we do not feel justified in taking the time and space necessary for a statement and discussion of the question. The evidence supposed to be newly discovered was cumulative in its character and of doubtful importance.

Other questions suggested in the brief have been considered, but are not of such importance as to require further discussion.

We find no error in the record, and the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

STATE OF NEBRASKA, EX REL. BANKERS UNION OF THE
WORLD, v. E. M. SEARLE, JR., AUDITOR.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 14,263.

1. **Insurance: LICENSE: DISCRETION OF AUDITOR.** The auditor is clothed with a broad discretion in determining whether a fraternal beneficial society has complied with the law and is entitled to a license to do business. It is a legal and not an arbitrary discretion.
2. ———: **FUNDS.** The mortuary fund of a fraternal beneficial society should be "kept separate and apart from the other funds of such society." The auditor may require this to be done before granting license to continue business.
3. ———: **LICENSE: DUTY OF AUDITOR.** Under the facts in this case, as disclosed by the petition demurred to, it is held that the auditor should have called the attention of the society to the irregularities practiced in regard to the preservation of the mortuary fund, so as to allow the society to comply with the requirements of the auditor in that regard, and, upon such compliance, should not have refused a license because of such former irregularities.

ORIGINAL application for a writ of mandamus to compel respondent to issue a license authorizing relator to transact business. *Writ denied.*

Weaver & Giller and Field, Ricketts & Ricketts, for relator.

Norris Brown, Attorney General, and W. T. Thompson, contra.

SEDGWICK, J.

This was an original application in this court for a writ of mandamus. The object of the proceeding was to compel the auditor to issue a license to the relator, authorizing it to transact business for the year commencing March 1, 1905. The relator is a fraternal beneficiary association, and made its annual report pursuant to the provisions of section 100, chapter 43, Compiled Statutes, 1903 (Ann. St.

6492), and, upon the auditor's refusing to issue a license, made a subsequent report. These two reports were set out in the petition and in the alternative writ, and in behalf of the auditor a general demurrer was filed to the petition. The demurrer having been overruled, the petition was amended by striking out the words "capriciously, wantonly and wilfully," and inserting the words "wrongfully and unlawfully," so that the allegation of the petition in that regard now is that the auditor wrongfully and unlawfully refused the license. After making this change in the petition, the demurrer was refiled, and the cause is now submitted upon the demurrer.

1. The first question presented upon the argument was whether the auditor has an absolute discretion in the matter of granting or refusing this license, or whether it is a legal discretion and must be based upon some reason derived from the statute. Authorities have been cited supporting the proposition that the discretion of the auditor is an arbitrary one. It seems that this is the law in some of the states, and in others a contrary rule obtains. We think that the question must be determined from a consideration of our statute. The language of section 100 is: "If, upon examination, the auditor is satisfied that such society is transacting its business according to law and in no sense fraudulently, he shall issue his certificate authorizing it to transact business for the following year." If this were the only provision of statute throwing any light upon the question, it might be difficult of solution, but section 98 provides: "All such societies organized under the laws of this or any other state, territory or province, and now doing business in this state, may continue such business provided they hereafter comply with the provisions of this act," and section 106 provides that "the auditor of public accounts must, within sixty days after the failure to make such report, or in case any such society shall exceed its powers, or shall conduct its business fraudulently, or shall fail to comply with any of the provisions of this act, give notice in writing to the attorney general, who shall im-

mediately commence an action against such society to enjoin the same from carrying on any business," so that the auditor is expressly prohibited from annulling a license when he has issued it, which would appear to be inconsistent with that large absolute and personal power over these corporations which is involved in the idea that he may refuse a license without having just cause so to do. We conclude, unhesitatingly, that it is not the policy of our statute to clothe the auditor with such unlimited powers.

2. The question next arising is whether under the circumstances of this case it was the duty of the auditor to issue the license to this relator. This question is to be resolved from the petition itself. Attached to the petition and made a part thereof is the first report of the relator to the auditor, above referred to, also the correspondence of the auditor in which he refused to grant the license, and a copy of a statement of the relator furnishing additional information requested by the auditor, and also a copy of a second corrected report. Was it the duty of the auditor, if not satisfied that the relator was entitled to the license, to inform the relator of the ground of his objection, and give the relator an opportunity to comply with the law and obtain the license? As we have seen, the statute provided that, if companies organized and doing business at the time of the enactment of the statute should thereafter comply with the law, they should be allowed to continue in business. It is insisted, and to our minds with apparent reason, that a proper understanding of the various provisions of the statute would lead to the conclusion that it was the intention of the legislature that companies of this class, that had been licensed and were allowed to do business for a term of years, should be permitted to continue their business under the same restrictions imposed upon companies that had been organized before this provision of the statute was enacted. It may be that a corporation of this nature might be guilty of such gross misconduct and fraud, and the fact of its guilt be so palpable and indefensible, as to justify the auditor in peremptorily

refusing to issue a license to such company upon any conditions whatever. This question we do not find it necessary now to determine or discuss. We prefer rather to consider the particular violations of law which it is insisted are disclosed by this petition.

3. The first reason assigned for the refusal of the license is that "nearly \$2,000 of these trust funds had disappeared in a single year, and no account made of any return." In answer to this charge it is pointed out by the relator that the first report shows two items of \$1,250 and \$750, respectively, owing by the relator to a certain company, and also shows two notes of the same company held by the relator, amounting to \$2,000, and the amended report shows \$2,000 of the assets of the company "charged off" because the mutual claims of these two parties had in the meantime been adjusted, and canceled each other.

4. The first report was filed with the auditor February 28, 1905, and the second report on the 15th day of April, the same year. In the meantime the company had been required to deposit the sum of \$304.92 as additional security upon a supersedeas bond. A change in the report in that amount was apparently intended to explain this transaction, but it is urged against the relator as an arbitrary attempt to account for a discrepancy in its accounts.

5. It is suggested in the brief that the first report gives the losses adjusted during the year at \$5,960, and the second report at \$8,716.76, an increase of \$2,756.76. The explanation made is that in the statement of losses adjusted in the first report the amounts were given as adjusted and allowed by the officers of the company, and that, subsequently, settlements of these claims were made upon compromise or judgment, and larger amounts were allowed. Without going into the details of this item, it is sufficient to say that there is nothing in the report, as made, from which it could be found that the officers of the company had intended to deceive the authorities of the state upon this point or that their action in connection with it was fraudulent.

6. In like manner it is suggested that the first report gives the losses not adjusted at \$5,536.23, the second report at \$6,113.90, an increase of \$577.67. Of course, a statement of losses not adjusted would not be expected to show with exactness in all cases the amount that might afterwards be required to adjust the loss, and it is urged in explanation of this point that some of the claims listed in the first report as not adjusted were in fact afterwards adjusted at a larger amount, and in making the second report, which was supposed to show correctly the amount of the claims that were in process of adjustment on the 31st day of December, 1904, these claims were stated at the amount that was finally found to be the company's liability thereon. Whether the second report should have stated the amount which the company's liability on these claims was supposed on the 31st day of December to be, or should have stated the amount which it was afterwards discovered the company was actually liable thereon, it does not appear from the petition that it was attempted by the relator to deceive the authorities or to practice any fraud in this regard.

7. There are several other supposed discrepancies pointed out in the two reports of a similar nature to those above mentioned, and, without taking time to go into details in regard to these items, it is sufficient to say that the explanations offered, arising from the facts disclosed in the reports themselves, sufficiently answer the suggestion that these discrepancies show a violation of law, or an intention to deceive the authorities, or to conduct the business of the company fraudulently.

8. The reports contain statements of "claims upon which proofs had not been received December 31, 1904," and it is objected that the amount of these claims is not included in the statement of the liabilities of the relator. It may be that we do not correctly apprehend the position of the respondent upon this point, but as the claims appear, as far as we have discovered, to be described in the reports, if a better method of tabulating them, or if they should

have been included in general statements of the liabilities of the company, it would seem that attention should have been called to such defects, as they could have been easily corrected.

9. There is one matter to which attention is called in this connection that appears to be of a more serious nature, Section 111 provides: "The moneys collected by any such society from its members, according to the plan or method provided in its constitution and by-laws for the payment of death or disability claims arising under the terms of its beneficiary certificates shall be kept separate and apart from the other funds of such society, and shall be used only in payment of such claims, and no part thereof shall be used by such society in payment of expenses of any kind or character." It was pointed out upon the argument that these reports show a deficiency in the mortuary fund of the society amounting to between \$4,000 and \$5,000. It is attempted to explain this deficiency by the suggestion that moneys belonging to this fund have been by the company advanced to its agents in the nature of loans, upon the understanding and agreement that the amount shall be deducted from moneys that may afterwards become due to the agents from the company, and the reports appear to show that money has been loaned during the year to agents and others more than sufficient to account for this deficiency in the mortuary fund. It is suggested also that "loans of relator's funds have been made during each year of its business existence in exactly the same way and for similar purposes as was done by the board of directors of said relator in 1904. Such loans have always been regarded as good ones by the insurance department and allowed as a proper asset, and relator's renewal of license has always been issued it from year to year without questioning the character of said loans, always including them in relator's assets." The brief then gives a detailed statement of these loans for each year during the existence of this company. These matters do not appear in the petition demurred to, and, if they did, it would not follow that

the auditor should continue to approve a practice which in his judgment was improper. It seems to us that the statute above quoted, as well as the general policy of the law as disclosed in the entire act, amply justifies the auditor in concluding to disapprove of such practice. It would seem that the mortuary fund should be "kept separate and apart from the other funds of such society," and if notes, bonds or securities were taken or held by the society for the mortuary funds loaned, the papers themselves should be deposited with or exhibited to the auditor, which would enable him to ascertain whether such loans were made upon sufficient securities. If the practice described in the brief has been indulged in by this society ever since it was organized, and such practice has been from year to year approved by the auditor, the most that can be urged from this would be that the auditor should have called the attention of the society's officers to his determination to change this practice, and give the society an opportunity to make such change, before refusing to issue the license to continue in business. The question as presented by this demurrer is not free from difficulties, but we have concluded that the matters shown in the petition demurred to are sufficient to entitle the relator to an opportunity to change its practice in this regard. It follows that the auditor, before refusing the license, should have pointed out this objection to the relator, and, upon satisfactory showing that the mortuary fund would be properly protected and preserved, should not have refused a license upon this ground.

The prayer of the petition is: "Wherefore, by reason of the premises, relator moves the court for a writ of mandamus directing defendant to issue to relator his certificate authorizing relator to transact its business in the state of Nebraska for the year 1905," and the command of the alternative writ is in substance the same. With the view that we take of the practice of this company in regard to the mortuary fund, we think that the discretion with which the law has clothed the auditor in that regard ought not to be ignored, and that the relator is not entitled to the re-

Hase v. State.

lief as prayed for in this application. It does not appear that the auditor has wilfully disregarded his duty toward this relator, and it will not be presumed that a peremptory writ will be necessary. The denial of the writ will, of course, be without prejudice to a new action when conditions are changed. The writ will be denied, without costs.

WRIT DENIED.

WILLIAM HASE V. STATE OF NEBRASKA.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 14,105.

1. A criminal information must charge explicitly all that is essential to constitute the offense sought to be described. Nothing can be interpolated therein, and its averments will not be aided by in-tendments.
2. Information. It is not necessary to charge the offense in the exact language of the statute, provided the words employed are equivalent in meaning to those contained therein.
3. Surplusage. Where words appear in an information which might be stricken out, leaving an offense sufficiently charged, and such words do not tend to negative any of the essential averments therein, they may be treated as surplusage, and be entirely rejected.
4. Information: HOMICIDE. By the application of the foregoing principles the information herein is found to be sufficient to charge the crime of assault with intent to commit a murder.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: EDWARD P. HOLMES, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

F. B. Righter and L. O. Burr, for plaintiff in error.

Norris Brown, Attorney General, W. T. Thompson, J. L. Caldwell, F. M. Tyrrell and C. E. Matson, contra.

BARNES, J.

The plaintiff in error, William Hase, was convicted in the district court for Lancaster county of the crime of

Hase v. State.

assault with intent to commit murder. He was sentenced to the penitentiary for the term of three years, and now prosecutes error.

The only question presented for our consideration is whether the information on which he was tried was sufficient to charge the crime of which he was convicted. The charging part of the information reads as follows: "That William Hase, late of the county aforesaid, on the 2d day of October, A. D. 1904, in the county of Lancaster and state of Nebraska, aforesaid, then and there being, did unlawfully and feloniously in and upon one Frank Williams then and there unlawfully, feloniously, purposely and of deliberate and premeditated malice an assault with a dangerous and deadly weapon, to wit, a knife, held in the hand of him the said William Hase, then and there, with the intent of him the said William Hase, then and there and thereby, the said Frank Williams unlawfully, feloniously, purposely and maliciously to kill and murder." It is contended that there is no averment contained in the information describing the offense; that just after the word "malice" and before the words "an assault" the charging verb "make," or "did make," is omitted, and it is insisted that this renders the information defective in substance and insufficient to charge any offense whatever. To support this contention, counsel cite *Smith v. State*, 21 Neb. 552; and *Schaffer v. State*, 22 Neb. 557, together with a number of authorities from other states. It is claimed that *Smith v. State* and *Schaffer v. State* cover the exact question involved in this inquiry, and support the contention of the accused. From an examination of those cases it appears that the question here under consideration did not arise in either of them. *Smith v. State* holds that an information must charge explicitly all that is essential to constitute the offense; that it cannot be aided by intendments, but must positively and explicitly state what the prisoner is called upon to answer; while in *Schaffer v. State* it was held that, where the purpose to kill is not averred by way of description of the

offense, the omission cannot be aided by intendment. That these propositions are sound there can be no doubt, but they fail to decide the point in controversy here. Counsel has also directed our attention to *State v. Halder*, 2 McCord (S. Car.), *377, 13 Am. Dec. 738. In that case the word "did" was not contained in the indictment at all, and it was held that such omission rendered it fatally defective. By referring to the charging part of the information in this case, which is quoted above, we find that the word "did" appears in its proper place, as follows: "Then and there being, *did* unlawfully, feloniously in and upon one Frank Williams, then and there unlawfully, feloniously, purposely and of deliberate and premeditated malice an assault with a dangerous and deadly weapon, to wit." This charge, stripped of its qualifying words and reduced to its simplest form, is that William Hase did assault Frank Williams. It has been repeatedly held by this court that it is not necessary to use the exact language of the statute in describing an offense, but it is sufficient to use words of the same import and meaning; that in charging the commission of an offense in an indictment it is not necessary that the exact words of the statute be used, provided the words employed are equivalent in meaning to those contained in the statute. *Whitman v. State*, 17 Neb. 224; *Hodgkins v. State*, 36 Neb. 160. It seems clear that the words "did an assault" are equivalent to the expression that the accused made an assault, and that the information, without the addition or elimination of any words thereto or therefrom, is technically sufficient to charge the crime of which the accused was convicted and sentenced.

Again, if we treat the word "did," not as an independent verb but as an auxiliary to the verb "assault," then the information is sufficient. By treating the word "an," immediately preceding the word "assault," as surplusage, the information would then read: "That William Hase, late of the county aforesaid, on the 2d day of October, A. D. 1904, in the county of Lancaster and state of Nebraska,

aforesaid, then and there being, did unlawfully and feloniously in and upon one Frank Williams then and there unlawfully, feloniously, purposely and of deliberate and premeditated malice assault with a dangerous and deadly weapon," etc. Section 412 of the criminal code, among other things, provides: "No indictment shall be deemed invalid, nor shall the trial, judgment, or other proceedings be stayed, arrested, or in any manner affected * * * for any surplusage or repugnant allegation when there is sufficient matter alleged to indicate the crime or person charged." In *State v. Kendall*, 38 Neb. 817, construing the above provision, we said:

"Where words appear in an information which might be stricken out, leaving an offense sufficiently charged, and such words do not tend to negative any of the essential averments, the state should, upon motion, be permitted to strike out such words."

In *Hall v. State*, 40 Neb. 320, it was said:

"Allegations in an information which are immaterial and unnecessary may be treated as surplusage and be entirely rejected."

It was further said in *Hurlburt v. State*, 52 Neb. 428:

"Averments in an information of matters which are immaterial, and not necessary ingredients of the offense charged, may be rejected as surplusage."

Again, by inserting the word "make" after the word "malice" and before the words "an assault," we would eliminate the question involved in this controversy. The rule, however, is well settled that nothing can be inserted in an information, but it is equally well settled that any matter which may be treated as surplusage can be stricken therefrom. So, striking out the word "an," there remains sufficient to clearly charge the crime of assault with intent to commit murder. While the information is carelessly and inartistically drawn, and we do not feel inclined to commend such criminal pleading, yet we hardly feel justified in holding that it is insufficient in form and substance to charge the accused with the offense of which he was convicted.

We have examined the cases cited by counsel for the accused, and find that they do not tend to shake either of the foregoing propositions, and we are therefore of opinion that the information is sufficient to sustain the conviction and sentence herein, and the judgment of the district court is therefore

AFFIRMED.

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COMPANY v. HENRY
FICKENSCHER.*

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 12,297.

1. A verdict will not be set aside on the ground of want of sufficient evidence to support it, unless the want is so great as to show that the verdict is manifestly wrong. *Sycamore Marsh Harvester Co. v. Grundrad*, 16 Neb. 529.
2. Evidence examined, and held to support the verdict.

ERROR to the district court for Dawson county: HOMER M. SULLIVAN, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

John N. Baldwin and Edson Rich, for plaintiff in error.

Warrington & Stewart, H. M. Sinclair and Roscoe Pound, contra.

LETTON, C.

This action was brought by Henry Fickenscher against the Union Pacific Railroad Company to recover damages sustained by him in a prairie fire which he alleges was set out through the negligence of the defendant. Upon the trial a judgment was rendered for the plaintiff, from which the defendant prosecutes error.

A detailed statement of the facts with reference to the fire, together with a map of the locality, is to be found in

* Rehearing allowed. See opinion, p. 507, *post*.

Union P. R. Co. v. Fickenscher, 72 Neb. 187. The plaintiff in this case is the brother of John Fickenscher, and, with his father, Ulrich Fickenscher, was in company with John at the time they were all three burned in the prairie fire. In the petition in error the defendant assigns 55 different grounds, but upon the argument and in the brief a comparatively small number of errors were considered. The assignment of error upon which the most stress has been laid is that the evidence does not support the verdict, and it is urged that the evidence in this case does not differ materially from that in the case of John Fickenscher against the railroad company for injuries resulting from the same fire, and that, since that case was reversed upon the ground that the verdict was not supported by sufficient evidence, this case, likewise, should be reversed for the same reason. If no additional evidence has been produced by the plaintiff in this case to sustain his contention that the fire which burned him was the fire which started from the defendant's right of way, then, under the rule in the former case, he cannot recover. The point upon which the testimony in the case of John Fickenscher seemed to this court to be insufficient was as to the identity of the fire which burned him with that which started at the railroad.

The theory of the plaintiff is that, when the railroad fire struck the sand hills, it spread off over them and drifted northwest before the wind; that one branch of the fire went a little west of north and kept to the east of the road running between Fosburg's and Ditto's, and that another branch of the fire crept to the westward, south of Dittq's, and ran several miles north before the change of wind occurred, when it was blown back across the unburned grass between the two fires to the place where the injury occurred.

The defendant's theory is that the fire never got any farther west than the point where the plaintiff and his neighbors were fighting it on the line east of Ditto's, and that the fire which burned the plaintiff was an entirely

different one, which had been burning for some time many miles northwest of the place where the plaintiff was injured, and which was blown down from the northwest with great rapidity when the wind changed early on Monday morning.

The surface of the country lying to the north and northwest from where the fire started is made up of sand hills from 10 to 100 feet in height. These sand hills were at this time sparsely covered with dry grass, in the depressions between the hills the growth being heavier. From the physical configuration of the country it was difficult to see where any fire was exactly situated, except when it burned upon the hills or when the observer stood upon one of the numerous knolls or sand hills. South of these hills lies the Platte valley, which consists of level bottom lands, where there is nothing to obstruct the sight and over which it was possible for observers south of the sand hills at some distance to see the relative location of the fire east or west of a given line. In the other case the plaintiff relied upon the testimony of witnesses residing south of Brady Island, who say they saw the fire gradually spread west until late in the evening, when it appeared to be north of George's pasture, which adjoins Brady Island on the east.

At the trial it was admitted, by agreement of the parties, that that portion of the fire which came up from west of Vroman and extended north from Ditto's house to the house of Fosburg, east of the road as shown upon the map, was out by 11 o'clock of Sunday evening, April 16, 1899, and the plaintiff makes no claim by reason of that portion of the branch of the fire just described east of the road running from Ditto's to Fosburg's. This disposes of one line of fire as far south as Ditto's house, the fire that the plaintiff and his associates had been fighting, and leaves the fire that burned him to be accounted for either as being the fire that had been burning on Sunday afternoon far to the northwest, or as a branch of the railroad fire which had crept to the westward, south of Ditto's,

thence run northward at least 4 or 5 miles, and was driven back when the wind changed.

There were over 60 witnesses examined in the case, who had observed these fires from nearly every point of the compass. Part of the strongest evidence in behalf of the plaintiff came from the mouths of defendant's witnesses, the plaintiff having made the effort to introduce this testimony taken by the defendant at the opening of his case, but, upon the objection of the defendant that he expected to produce it, the defendant's objection was sustained, and it only came into the case by being offered by the defendant. One McIntyre, a witness for the defendant, testified that from about 12 o'clock until 2 o'clock on Sunday night he was fighting a fire near the west line of section 8 about one-half mile west of Ditto's house; that this was a side fire, and that the head fire had run 6 or 8 miles to the north, as well as he could judge. It was agreed, however, by the parties that if he were present upon the stand he would testify that, when he spoke of the head fire having gone on, he meant the fire that had gone east of Fosburg's. On cross-examination he testified that at 2 o'clock on Monday morning, when he left this place, a fire was burning to the northwest, which he supposed was the head fire of that which he was fighting. McIntyre is an employee of the defendant, who lives at Brady Island. Unless he was mistaken as to the locality, his evidence shows that a fire was burning about one-half mile south and west of Ditto's at that time, and one was burning 6 or 8 miles northwest, after the line of fire the plaintiff had been fighting was extinguished as far south as Ditto's. Two witnesses, Larson and Jacobson, testify that on Sunday afternoon and evening they had been fighting fire to the south and east of where McIntyre was; that the fire which they were fighting had burned along on the north side of sections 16 and 17, which would be in the direction of the point where McIntyre says he was, and that about 12 or 1 o'clock at night they saw a big fire up near them, apparently north and west of near

Ditto's. Jacobson further testifies that, when they were back-firing on Larson's pasture, they followed the south line of the fire to the west edge of the pasture, which would be about south of Ditto's house, according to the map, and the head fire had gone northwest when they got to the west line of the pasture. The testimony of one Scott, a witness for the defendant, who lives south of the Platte river, is to the effect that about 9 or 10 o'clock on Sunday night he saw a fire to the north of him; it seemed to be just above Mr. Beatty's place, which was just north of where Scott lived and a mile and a half west of Ditto's. This testimony is corroborated by the testimony of Pearl Scott, his daughter, who testified that she could see the flames of this fire and that it seemed to be north and west of Beatty's. John Elander, who lives a mile east of the place of injury, testified that at half past 2 o'clock on Monday morning he could see a fire—"a little flame or red"—3 or 4 miles northwest of his house. One Peterson, who lives northwest of Ditto's, says that he saw a fire by Ditto's house on Sunday afternoon, but did not see it after it got dark, although he looked for it; that at 10 o'clock at night he could not see any fire down there, that "it was west"; and testifies, further, in substance, that at that time he could see fire about 4 or 5 miles northwest. It blazed so high he could see the fire. He saw a fire much farther off to the northwest, but very faint, and the nearer fire that he saw in the northwest burned him out. That he watched it from that time until it came over his place about 4 or 5 in the morning. That at 8 o'clock on Sunday night he saw the "railroad fire" about 2 miles east of his place, but saw no fire toward Brady Island. He also saw a fire a little bit west, but mostly north. That the distant fire was away about 10 or 12 miles, he thought, and that, if he looked on a line north from his house, this fire that he saw at a great distance would be 6 miles west of that line, he thought. Mrs. Peterson also testified that on Sunday night about 9 or 10 or 11 o'clock she saw two fires in the northwest, one not as close as the other, and

did not see any fire southeast at that time; that she could see the flames of the northwest fire then, and that it was about 6 or 7 miles away. Mr. Pettit, who lives south of Peterson's and 2 miles northwest of Ditto's, says that between 12 and 1 o'clock on Sunday night the fire east of Ditto's had apparently gone out; that he did not see any smoke between his place and Brady Island, and that the fire which was in the northwest was apparently 25 or 30 miles away. Mrs. Anderson, who lived at his house, had been to Brady Island on Sunday night, and drove from there to Pettit's about 8 o'clock. There was no fire between Pettit's and Brady Island at that time. About 12 or 1 o'clock at night she saw a fire to the southeast or south.

A number of defendant's witnesses live 10 or 12 miles north and west of Brady Island, several living north of the station of Maxwell. Some of these men testify they saw a fire on Sunday evening toward Maxwell, close to Maxwell, while others saw no fire that afternoon. One Talbot, who lives on section 13, township 15, range 29, said on Sunday evening he saw a fire right east of him, which was going north; that the end toward the south seemed to be out, and the north end toward Cox's settlement seemed to be burning, and that the Cox settlement was 12 miles north and east, pretty nearly east. Another of defendant's witnesses, named Herring, who lives 14 miles northwest of Brady Island, saw a fire southeast of him on Sunday evening. That he and his son sat up and watched this fire until after midnight on Sunday night. W. T. De Witt, who lives about 7 or 8 miles north of Brady Island, saw a fire a little southeast of him, a very little southeast, on Sunday night, and, the last time he saw it, it seemed to be moving northwest. Mrs. Mott, who lives 5 miles north of Brady Island, testifies she first saw the southeast fire about 3 o'clock on Sunday; that she last saw it about 12 o'clock that night, and it appeared to be going northeast at that time; that she did not notice any fire to the northwest at that time, but that early in the morning she saw a fire to

the northwest, some distance away, and that it came to their place in about 2 hours from the time she first saw it. Theodore Anderson, a boy, who lived $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles northeast of Brady Island, says that at midnight that night he was on the southeast corner of their place, and that he could see a fire south of the place when he was there; that the fire appeared to be between a mile and a quarter and a mile and a half away.

In addition to this testimony a number of witnesses for the plaintiff, who live in the Platte valley, some of whom did not testify in the former case, testified to the location of the fire during Sunday evening and night among the sand hills on the north side of the railroad. These witnesses place the location of the fire to the west of the line of fire extending from Fosburg's east to Ditto's and thus corroborate the testimony of McIntyre, Larson, Jacobson and other witnesses, who described a line of fire as being west of Ditto's. So far, then, as the existence of a line of fire to the westward of the line contended for by the defendant as the west line of the railroad fire, we are of the opinion that there was sufficient testimony to submit to the jury, if sufficiently connected with the fire at the place of injury to make it probable that this fire was the proximate cause of the injury.

We must next consider whether there is any evidence to connect these fires. The Fickenschers, with Fosburg and others, in the party who were fighting the fire to the east of Ditto's, were at Ditto's on their way home at about 1 o'clock in the morning. Mr. Ulrich Fickenschcr, the father, with his sons, John and Henry, left Fosburg's while it was still dark, and apparently reached the place of injury about half past 4. This fire reached Ditto's before daylight, for he testifies that his wife was wakened and she woke him up sometime before daylight. A number of defendant's witnesses, who lived far to the north and northwest of the place of injury, testified that the fire which came from the northwest reached them by daylight. The fire reached Peterson's, 2 miles west and $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of

the place of injury, about 5 o'clock on Monday morning. Mr. Pettit, who lived south of Peterson, testified that the fire struck him between 5 and 6 o'clock on Monday morning. Mr. Guyer, who lives 10 miles north and 10 miles west of the place of injury, says that the northwest fire came down on him on Monday morning at daylight. Edward Johnson, who lives about 5 miles north and 1 mile west from the place of injury, testifies the fire reached him from the northwest just a little before daylight. One Wilson, who lives north and west of Maxwell, far to the northwest of Brady Island, testifies that the fire from the northwest came to his place just before daylight. One Herring, who lives 14 miles northwest of Brady Island, says the fire from the northwest reached his place about 4 o'clock on Monday morning. Mr. De Witt, who lived still north of Herring, testifies that he had been up watching both fires; that the south fire was running northwest, as nearly as he could make out; that he was awakened in the morning by a rush of wind that struck the north window; that it was about 4 o'clock; that he went in and lay down again, when his wife told him to look out for the fire; that it was about 4 o'clock, just getting daylight at that time. Mrs. Mott says that she first saw the northwest fire toward morning, somewhere near the break of day, and that it took about 2 hours to come to their place; that she first saw it in the northwest, and that it was just daylight when it passed their place, which is north of Brady Island, and about 6 miles northwest of the place of injury. Elander says that, when he came back from fighting the southeast fire about half past two in the morning, he could see a little bit of flame about 3 or 4 miles to the northwest and a little north, but mostly west.

It is said in the opinion by Mr. Commissioner DAY in *Union P. R. Co. v. Fickenscher*, *supra*: "It seems a striking fact that none of the neighbors living in the vicinity of where the fire is supposed to have burned saw it or even the reflection of it." But in this case we have the testimony of George and Pearl Scott, of Lynch and of Guyer,

and of other witnesses, which was not taken in the former case, and have additional facts from the same witnesses, such as the burning of the grass under the fresh-turned sod, and the finding of burned-over ground in the line over which the Fosburg-Fickenscher party was back-firing.

In this examination of the testimony we have selected only that part of the same which tends to support the plaintiff's contention. If the evidence upon the part of the plaintiff, standing alone, is sufficient to convince any ordinary and reasonable mind that the fire which burned the plaintiff found its origin in a fire which started by defendant's negligence upon its right of way, then there is sufficient testimony to support the verdict. A verdict will not be set aside on the ground of a want of sufficient evidence to support it, unless the want is so great as to show that the verdict is manifestly wrong. *McCune v. Thomas*, 6 Neb. 488; *Sycamore Marsh Harvester Co. v. Grundrad*, 16 Neb. 529; *Young v. Roberts*, 17 Neb. 426; *Spurck v. Dean*, 49 Neb. 66.

We think there was sufficient circumstantial evidence that a branch of the railroad fire was burning west and northwest of Ditto's after 11 o'clock on Sunday night, that it had run to the north and west, just west of Ditto's, and that the change of wind on Sunday morning blew it to the southeastward, and to the point where the plaintiff was injured before the fire which had been burning far to the northwest came down, to warrant the court in submitting the whole question to the jury. The stories told by the witnesses upon both sides are in many instances contradictory and inconsistent with that of other witnesses upon the same side of the case. The writer's experience of over 35 years in this state has taught him that the smoke arising from, and the reflection in the sky of, a prairie fire are often very poor guides to its actual situation, and the testimony in this case has only served to confirm this experience. We do not believe that the witnesses wilfully misrepresented the facts, but some of them must have been mistaken as to the fire. The jury were men who lived in the

sand-hill country, who knew the conditions surrounding them, and whose experience in their daily walk of life was a valuable factor in weighing the testimony and in arriving at a proper verdict. From the circumstances, direct evidence of the identity of this fire with the railroad fire was unattainable, and the plaintiff was obliged to rely upon circumstantial evidence. While not entirely satisfied, we do not feel justified in displacing the tribunal provided by the law to determine questions of fact, and believe that the verdict is not contrary to, but is sustained by, the evidence.

Error is assigned in permitting cross-examination of the witness Kreitsenstein as to facts occurring after the time to which his examination in chief was directed. We are unable to see wherein the defendant was prejudiced by this cross-examination.

It is urged that the court erred in sustaining an objection to a question asked the engineer of the train that set out the fire. The question was answered before the objection was made. The answer was not stricken out, so the defendant suffered no injury by the ruling. Besides, the engineer afterwards testified, without objection, substantially to the same effect.

The objections urged to the giving and refusal of instructions we think are not well taken, and the case appears to have been fairly submitted to the jury.

Error is assigned by the defendant with reference to an admonition given to the jury by the court, after it had been out about 24 hours, as to the importance of their agreeing upon a verdict. We fail to discern in what manner the defendant was prejudiced by this remark. It appears that jury did not agree upon a verdict for 3½ hours after this advice was given by the court, which shows that, if the admonition had any effect, it took a long time to operate, and that the jury took full time for deliberation thereafter.

We do not believe that the other matters complained of, which were presented to the trial court at the time the

motion for a new trial was heard, are of sufficient gravity to warrant this court in reversing the judgment of the trial court in refusing to grant a new trial.

Upon the whole, the case seems to have been carefully and impartially tried and submitted to the jury, and we recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

OLDHAM, C., concurs. AMES, C., not sitting.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

The following opinion on rehearing was filed December 7, 1906. *Reversed:*

1. **Verdict: EVIDENCE: REVIEW.** This court will not set aside the verdict of a jury for want of evidence to support it, if there is sufficient evidence in the record, taken by itself, to have supported a judgment by default, unless the preponderance of the evidence against the verdict is so strong as to indicate that the verdict must have been predicated upon something other than the evidence.
2. **Railroads: ACTION FOR DAMAGES: EVIDENCE.** In an action for damages by fire originating in the carelessness of the defendant, the plaintiff to establish his cause of action must trace the fire from the place of its origin, and identify the fire which caused the damage with the fire which was originated by the defendant. If the evidence shows several prairie fires of different origin, each of them originating several miles from the place of damage, it is not sufficient to show that it is more probable that the fire started by the defendant was the one that caused the damage. A verdict cannot be supported by probabilities and conjecture.

SEDGWICK, C. J.

This is an action for damage by fire which it was alleged was caused by the negligence of the defendant. A map showing the location, and in part also the course of the fire, may be found in connection with the opinion of

this court in the case of *Union P. R. Co. v. Fickenscher*, 72 Neb. 187. Ulrich Fickenscher and his two sons, John and Henry, were together when they were injured by fire on the night in question, and each of them brought an action against this defendant to recover damages. The case just referred to was the action of John Fickenscher, and in that case it was held that the evidence was not sufficient to support the verdict against the defendant. In the case of Henry Fickenscher it was held that there was sufficient evidence to require the matter to be submitted to a jury, and that a judgment for the plaintiff based upon a favorable verdict of a jury should be affirmed. *Union P. R. Co. v. Fickenscher*, ante, p. 497. It was thought that further evidence had been given in the latter case sufficient to require a different conclusion from that reached in the former. A motion for rehearing was filed in the case of Henry Fickenscher, and, as the action of Ulrich Fickenscher and two actions against the same defendant begun by John Westlund and John Fosberg, respectively, were all actions for damages alleged to have been occasioned by the same fire, all of the plaintiffs being represented by the same counsel, arguments were heard in all the cases together. It was substantially conceded upon the argument by counsel for the claimants that this court was in error in supposing that there was other and different substantial evidence in the Henry Fickenscher case, distinguishing it from the John Fickenscher case before determined by this court. It was insisted that the decision of this court in the first case was not now binding upon the court in the other cases. It was urged that that judgment could not be considered as *res adjudicata* in the other cases, because the parties were not the same, and, also, because all of the cases depended upon questions of fact, and upon the issue in each case the trial was had and witnesses examined independently of the trial of the issues in the case first decided. It was also conceded that the evidence upon the principal issue in the remaining cases was substantially the same as the evidence

in the Henry Fickenscher case. It was urged that the court re-examine the whole question upon the record in the Henry Fickenscher case, and upon that theory the argument upon the last hearing was presented. Believing that counsel are correct upon these preliminary questions, we have re-examined the question presented in the light of the additional briefs filed and the subsequent arguments.

From the foregoing observations it will be seen that it is now unnecessary to restate the general outlines of the evidence as contained in the record. Such statement will be found in the two opinions above referred to, and reference is made to those opinions and to the map accompanying the first. It will be remembered that the plaintiff, Henry Fickenscher, with his brother John and his father and Mr. Fosberg were fighting the main branch of the "Vroman fire" (the fire which originated upon or near the right of way of defendant) near Mr. Fosberg's place, with a number of other people, until that fire was extinguished, and the plaintiff, with his brother and father and Mr. Fosberg, went down to Mr. Ditto's place to fight the fire which was burning just south of this place. They reached Mr. Ditto's place at about 1 o'clock, and continued in that vicinity until about 3 o'clock in the morning, when they started to return to Mr. Fosberg's place. The distance was three or more miles. These four men seem to be intelligent men and fair witnesses. They were in a wagon drawn by Mr. Fosberg's team. The plaintiff himself was a lad of about 18 years. He was exhausted with his labor and was sleeping in the wagon. Mr. Fosberg was driving the team. He testifies that the wind began to come from the northwest at about the time they started to go home, that it grew stronger as they went on, and that before they reached his place it was blowing in a gale. He drove his horses as fast as he could make them go; they were running. He was asked if he noticed fire in the north and northwest before he got home, and answered: "I noticed in the sky there must be some fire, but I couldn't see any on the ground." When they came to within about 40 rods of Fos-

berg's house, where the Fickenschers had left their wagon, the Fickenschers took their team (which they had been leading behind the Fosberg wagon) and wagon and started for their home about three miles directly north. They had gone about 80 or 100 rods when the fire from the northwest was upon them and the plaintiff suffered the injury sued for.

In the briefs and in the oral arguments some attention was given to the evidence tending to show that the fire, which was of unknown origin and which came down from the northwest, was the cause of the damage complained of. The defendant insisted that this was the fire that damaged the plaintiff. Of course, if that contention could be established, it would relieve the defendant of liability. If, however, the defendant failed to establish that contention, the burden would still rest upon the plaintiff to show that the fire which originated by the defendant's negligence was the cause of the damage. To prove that the defendant originated a fire, and that the plaintiff was damaged by fire, and that the fire originated by the defendant could have caused the damage, would not be sufficient to make the plaintiff's case. This, as was shown in the first opinion, would be basing a verdict upon possibilities and conjecture. In order to make the defendant responsible for the damages caused by the fire, the plaintiff must prove that the fire originated by the defendant was the fire that caused the damage. The course of the fire must be traced by the evidence so as to connect the fire that caused the damage with the fire for which the defendant is responsible. If the plaintiff has failed to do this, then the evidence in regard to the fire called the "northwest fire" cannot establish a cause of action in this case. It is not a question of probabilities as to which fire caused the damage. The jury were not at liberty to take a general view of the whole evidence and see which was more probable, and base their verdict upon the weakness of the evidence tending to show that the northwest fire caused the damage. It is not clearly shown by the evidence how far

the northwest fire (the fire of unknown origin) was distant from the scene of damage at the time that the wind changed from a southerly direction to a northwesterly direction. After the change the wind came down from the northwest in a vigorous gale. Some witnesses estimated it as high as 50 miles an hour, and if we suppose that the rate of the wind was 40 miles an hour, and that the fire traveled at one-half that rate after the wind from the northwest had reached it, and if the fire was then 20 miles distant from the scene of damage, the gale would reach that place in 30 minutes, while it would require an hour for the fire to travel over the same distance; so that the fire would not reach the place where the damage occurred until some 30 minutes after the gale reached it. The evidence shows that the fire traveled very rapidly. Some of the witnesses testified that its rate was faster than a horse could run, but the evidence is not harmonious and certain on any of these points, and there was some latitude left for the finding of a jury. The gale may have reached the place of damage an hour in advance of the fire or, possibly, even more, and we do not think that the evidence is so conclusive upon this point that the verdict of the jury, which essentially finds that this fire from the northwest did not cause the damage, is unsupported by sufficient evidence upon that point. The evidence in regard to this fire, then, is not conclusive on the question under investigation. We are not at liberty to say what our conclusion would be upon the evidence as to whether this northwest fire caused the damage. It is sufficient to say that the evidence taken together upon that point is all of so conflicting a nature that the question must necessarily have been left to the determination of a jury.

The remaining question, then, and the question upon which the determination of these cases depends, which has already been referred to, is whether there is sufficient evidence in this record to support a finding that the fire, originated by the carelessness of the defendant, caused the damage. This itself is peculiarly a question for the jury.

If there is substantial and credible evidence tracing the fire from its origin near the defendant's right of way and connecting it with the fire that caused the damage, this court will not interfere with the finding of the jury, even though it seems clear that the preponderance of the evidence is the other way. In other words, the court will in no case set aside the verdict of the jury upon questions of fact, if there is sufficient evidence in the record, taken by itself, to have supported a judgment by default, unless the preponderance of the evidence against the verdict is so overwhelming as to indicate that the verdict must have been predicated upon something other than the evidence. It has been said that, as a chain is no stronger than its weakest link, so if the chain of evidence entirely fails at some vital point, there is a failure of proof; and if the testimony of the witnesses, taken together, does not show that this fire for which the defendant is responsible extended to the place where the damage occurred, and there are no circumstances proved from which such conclusion is a reasonable inference, the plaintiff's case must fail. The fire caused by the defendant originated a little over 7 miles south, and a short distance east, of the place where the damage sued for occurred. The course of this fire, as shown upon the map referred to, was for about one-half of its distance a little west of north, and then nearly directly north until it had reached a place about 80 or 100 rods southeast from the place of damage, and then in an irregular course to the north and east, where it was extinguished. The map is substantially, although not entirely, accurate in showing the course of the fire as disclosed by the evidence. It is sufficiently accurate for the purposes of this discussion. The witnesses agree, and it is conceded by the parties, that this fire, which is called the "head fire," was extinguished before the injury complained of occurred.

The contention is that a branch from this fire ran to the west, and then north, until it was caught by the gale from the northwest and brought down to the place of damage.

Upon this contention the plaintiff rests his case. There is evidence showing that a side fire left this fire at a point about $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of the place where the accident occurred and burned toward the west. This was south of and not far from, the line between sections 9 and 16; and the plaintiff insists that there is evidence sufficient to warrant a finding that this fire ran to a point nearly north from Brady Island, and thence in a northerly direction until it encountered the gale from the northwest and was carried to the southeast to the place of the accident. In opening the discussion upon this point the plaintiff's brief says: "Of the testimony to sustain the verdict, the witnesses may be properly divided into four groups: (1) Those who actually saw the fire go west and northwest of the Fosberg-Ditto road. (2) Those who lived on the Platte valley and could see the fire north of them, and did observe its location east or west of a given line. (3) Those who saw fire in the locality west of where the boy was burned, shortly before the wind changed. (4) Those who testify concerning the time when the northwest fire came down." The witnesses Charles Jacobson, Anna Johnson, Thomas Lynch, J. R. Elliott and William McIntyre are named by the plaintiff as the ones who actually saw the fire go west. The brief says that McIntyre's testimony is very important. It is natural therefore first to look at his evidence. This witness resided in Brady Island, four miles west and half a mile north of the place where this side fire is alleged to have left the main line of the fire. He testified that he went out where the fire was burning, and arrived there at about 12 o'clock Sunday night. He remained there about one hour and a half or two hours, and was plowing and fighting fire. He says that two men were with him. He does not know who they were. The first one was a "bum," and the other he thinks was Robert Craig, but he is not sure. He says that the fire that he was fighting was "south of west about half a mile" from G. L. Ditto's place. The witness did not go to Ditto's place, and he does not disclose any means of

knowing in what direction he was from Ditto's place, except that he knew the general location of Ditto's place and estimated about how far he had gone from Brady Island, so that his evidence in regard to the exact location is somewhat indefinite. If his evidence is believed, it would not tend to prove that the fire had progressed more than one mile to the west from the main fire. He says that the fire was traveling a very little west of north, and, when asked at what rate it was traveling, he said that he did not know, "but it was a fire that was kind of backing, there was very little wind at that time." He was then asked the leading question: "The direction in which the fire was traveling under the prevailing wind would have driven this fire past James Romine, who lived on northeast quarter of 16-12-26, and past Pettit, who lived on southeast quarter 32-13-26, would it not?" His answer was: "Why, if you gave it time, I suppose it would have backed in." This it will be remembered was the last that this witness knew of the fire. He left it at about 2 o'clock in the morning. He plowed a furrow from one-half to three-quarters of a mile long while he was there. This furrow was very nearly east of the west line of section 8. The purpose would seem to have been to stop the westward progress of the fire beyond that point. He says that the wind changed direction about 3 o'clock, which would be an hour later. He says that he saw a fire to the northwest, and that this was "the head fire" of this same fire that he was fighting; but, as he himself was west of the main fire, he must have intended to have said northeast. The most that can be said of the evidence of this witness as supporting the plaintiff's theory is that the side fire, called in the record the "McIntyre fire," which was $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles south of the place of the accident, had extended a mile toward the west, possibly a mile and a half from the main fire, about an hour before the gale from the northwest reached Brady Island.

The witness Jacobson lived about a mile south and nearly the same distance west from the point where the

side fire in question diverged from the main fire. He says that he saw the main fire, and that it moved nearly north, a little west, and that, at about 10 o'clock or after, the fire went up into section 16. The course of the main fire seems to have been across the corner of section 16 and his evidence would indicate that this was what he had in mind. About 10 o'clock this witness went over to the scene of the fire. He was asked to point out on the map about where he found the fire. He seems to have hesitated and was asked if he could see, and said that he could not see very well. He seems to have pointed out a place on the map where he understood the fire was at about 10 o'clock, but the record does not show where he so located it, but he says he fought a back fire on the east line of his fence, which will be shown by a glance at the map could not have been this side fire in question. He says that the fire that he was fighting ran "northeast across the north end of the pasture." The pasture included nearly all of section 16, and the main fire, as before stated, ran across a corner of this section, so that it is not clear whether the witness referred to the main fire or to the side fire referred to by the witness McIntyre. He said that he saw a fire go off to the northeast, and was asked the question: "Tell the jury about how far that fire went off; in other words, did it go in south of Ditto's"? He answered: "Yes, come that way, I can't tell exactly how far it went." He says that he found a sod that was turned over in his pasture and was burned on the other side, showing that the ground was burned before the sod was turned over; but he fails to state where this was, or when or by whom the sod was turned over. The pasture included about three sections of land.

The witness Elliott saw the fire only from the hotel in Brady Island. His evidence shows that he saw the reflection of the principal fire up to about 10 o'clock at night, when he retired for the night. Afterwards he again arose and saw the reflection of a fire somewhere northeast of Brady Island. He does not know anything about what

time it was when he saw it, nor where the fire was located. This evidence is of no assistance in the case.

The witness Anna Johnson testified that she lived several miles south of Brady Island. She went to Brady Island to church between 6 and 7 o'clock. She then saw a fire down around George's pasture. This is the same pasture that is marked "Beatty's pasture" on the map. It lies directly east from Brady Island. She undoubtedly saw the reflection of the main fire, which all the witnesses agree was east from Brady Island at that time, and her mistake, if any, was in estimating the distance that the fire was from her. She left the church about half past 8 in the evening, and she says that the fire "looked like it was north of Brady, northwest." That the McIntyre fire should be northwest of Brady Island at that time is not possible under the evidence of all the witnesses. If she saw a fire to the northwest of Brady Island then, it must have been a third fire, which is indicated by the witness Peterson. She seems to have reached home at about half past 2 in the morning. She says she saw the fire then, "which was still moving on," and, when asked where she would say the fire then was from Brady Island, answered: "I could not say, I am not acquainted there. Q. Did it look like it was farther away and farther west? A. Yes, sir."

The witness Thomas Lynch was in Brady Island on the evening of the fire. He was there from 3 or 4 o'clock in the afternoon until the next morning. He noticed the fire as he went to Brady Island in the afternoon. He was asked: "Did you notice a fire north and east of the town of Brady Island that night?" and answered, "Yes, sir." This was between 10 and 11 o'clock. He was asked this question: "Q. And, when you say north of Brady, you don't mean on a straight line north, but you mean the fire was over here east of Brady and north of a line that would run through Brady east and west? A. Yes, sir."

Mr. Lawrence Larson, who was the owner of the so-called Larson pasture in which Mr. Jacobson lived, was

with Mr. Jacobson during the evening fighting the fire, which was on the east side of his pasture, to prevent its spreading over the pasture. He testifies that the fire also burned across the north side of his pasture, which was about the center of section 16, and not on the north side of that section, as shown in the map. He found in the morning that the posts of his fence along that line had been burned, but he did not trace this fire any farther to the west than other witnesses have done, that is, possibly, to section 17, but, at all events, not far into that section. His testimony, which is cited by the plaintiff as tending to show that the McIntyre fire escaped to the northwest in the early part of the evening, was in answer to this question: "Q. Now, I wish you would indicate on the map about where you left the east line of section 21 at 3 o'clock in the morning?" His answer was: "Why, I left it at the southeast corner." * * * "Q. What would you say, Mr. Larson, as to it being west of Ditto's at that time? A. I wouldn't say how far west, because I wasn't west myself only over to Jacobson's; but I should judge the fire was right in there around him, north and east and west and all over." The main fire, being that part of the Vroman fire which was afterwards extinguished, burned to the north, not more than a quarter of a mile west of a line due north from the Ditto farm. This testimony of Mr. Larson in regard to the fire north of him was given with reference to the time he left Mr. Jacobson's house, about 12 o'clock at night. A straight line drawn directly from Mr. Jacobson's house across Mr. Ditto's place would strike the line of the Vroman fire, which was afterwards extinguished. The McIntyre fire, if it ran into section 17, would be directly south of Mr. Ditto's farm; so that Mr. Larson's testimony proved that at that time he saw either the main branch of the Vroman fire or the McIntyre fire, or, perhaps, the reflection of both, and he may well have supposed that the fire was right around Mr. Ditto's farm. This evidence does not tend to prove that the McIntyre fire went farther to the northwest than into section 17.

Mr. George Scott lived about five miles south and two miles west from the point where the McIntyre fire is supposed to have left the main course of the Vroman fire. If the McIntyre fire extended a mile and a half west into section 17, it would be nearly due north, perhaps half a mile east of Mr. Scott's place. He says that between 9 and 10 o'clock he saw a fire "most due north" from his place, "and that would bring it up about Mr. Beatty's place." Mr. Beatty's place extends into section 17, so that this evidence does not tend to show that the fire was farther west than it was shown to be by the witnesses who were present at the McIntyre fire.

The evidence of the five witnesses relied on by plaintiff attempts to trace the side fire, which is called the McIntyre fire, and which left the main line of the Vroman fire, as above stated, and tends to prove that it extended west in the vicinity of the north line of the Larson pasture for a distance of about a mile. It does not tend to prove that it extended farther than a mile and a half. There is no evidence of any other witnesses who saw this fire advance, or afterwards traced its course farther to the west or north. There is testimony that several "sods" were observed that had been turned over by the plow, and were so burned on the under side as to indicate that the plowing was done after the fire had passed over. The evidence shows that some of the plowing, at least, was recklessly done (as by the witness Lynch and those with him), and those accompanying the men doing the plowing were continually "back-firing," so that evidence that a few isolated burned sods were turned by the plow is of no consequence.

What is the evidence to trace this "McIntyre fire" from the place where it is left by these witnesses to the place where the damage occurred? It will be remembered that the McIntyre fire is supposed to have left the main course of the Vroman fire at a point something over four miles directly south of the place where the damage occurred. The fire did not pass between section 32, where Mr. Pettit resided, and Brady Island. This is clearly shown by the

evidence, and is conceded by plaintiff, and will be again referred to. To have escaped, then, to the northwest, as contended, this McIntyre fire must have passed between Mr. Pettit's place and the main line of the Vroman fire, which is a little over a mile, possibly a mile and a half, distant. The plowing done by Fosberg and Fickenschiers from soon after 12 o'clock until about 3 when they returned to Fosberg's place, is shown upon the map along the line of road from Fosberg's to Ditto's farm. The McIntyre fire, upon plaintiff's theory, must have passed several miles along substantially the same general direction of this plowing, and not long before the plowing began. It seems incredible that these men could have spent several hours in plowing along the vicinity where the fire had so recently passed; and, when it is remembered that there is no direct evidence that the fire had passed through there at that time, then, it must be said that there is an entire failure of evidence at that point, unless it is shown that there actually was fire to the north and west of the Pettit farm between 12 o'clock and the time of the commencement of the northwest gale, and this be regarded as evidence that the McIntyre fire must have gone through the route indicated.

In the plaintiff's brief the evidence that a fire passed toward the north on the east side of the Pettit farm is discussed in two branches, the evidence of those witnesses who resided on the Platte valley to the south of Brady Island, and the evidence of those witnesses who resided in the vicinity of the Pettit place. The witnesses who resided on the Platte valley were not situated so as to give satisfactory evidence in regard to the location of a fire that must have been seven or more miles distant, and it is not necessary to enter into analysis of their testimony. Mr. Peter Peterson and his wife, who also lived on section 32, both testified that at 10 o'clock in the evening they saw a fire three or four miles northwest of their place, and that it was a big fire. If this evidence is true, it establishes the existence of a third fire. It could not have been the fire

that came down from the northwest, because that fire clearly had not reached within three or four miles of the Peterson place at that hour of the night. It could not have been the so-called Vroman fire, because the course of the main branch or "head fire" is traced by the evidence, and it is conceded that that branch of the fire was extinguished before the damage occurred. It could not be that the so-called McIntyre fire, that is, the branch of the Vroman fire which extended to the west, and in regard to which so much evidence was received and so much discussion was had on the part of both parties, extended to the west and north between Mr. Pettit's place and Brady Island. Indeed, in the last brief filed in behalf of the plaintiff, it is said: "No one ever claimed that the McIntyre line of fire went between Pettit's place and Brady Island, or south or southwest of him, but that it did go east of him." Mr. Pettit's place joins the Peterson place on the south, and Mr. Anderson's place is in section 20, a mile directly north from Peterson's place. Mr. Anderson testifies that the fire burning north from Vroman's did not at any time burn south of Pettit's house. This evidence is so far corroborated and is so far reliable that it is quoted as reliable in plaintiff's brief. We have seen that there is an entire failure of proof that the so-called McIntyre fire passed over the territory between Pettit's place and the place of the accident, and then off to the west, so as to be northwest from Peterson's place at 10 o'clock in the evening. It follows that, if the evidence of the Petersons is regarded as credible, it goes far toward proving that a third fire had been started in the northwest before the so-called northwest fire came down with the gale. The evidence shows, and it is also a matter of common knowledge, that back-firing, as it is called, is a usual method of protecting one's property from approaching fire. When the wind had changed to the northwest, and had reached the fire that is called the northwest fire, and had increased the volume and power of that fire so as to make it visible to those in the course that that fire must take, the people threatened

would be justified in putting out new fires for their protection. Did the fire which is testified to by the Petersons have such an origin? These plaintiffs, in order to recover from the defendant, must so trace the fire originated by the defendant as to show that that fire, and no other, was the cause of their damage. Their evidence wholly fails to do this. They have been greatly injured without any fault of their own, and the party who caused their injury ought to make good their loss. Their misfortune is in not being able to produce evidence to prove who caused their damage.

The judgment heretofore entered is vacated, and the judgment of the district court reversed and the cause remanded.

REVERSED.

LETTON, J., concurring.

I have carefully reexamined the entire record in this case in the light of the aid afforded by the briefs and argument of counsel upon rehearing. As indicated in my former opinion, the question is a very close one. I think, however, that there is ample evidence to sustain the plaintiff's contention that a portion of the Vroman fire extended westward from the Ditto-Fosberg line, and that this branch fire, extending across the north line of the Larson pasture and northward into section 8, is the identical fire which is testified to by the defendant's witness, McIntyre. At 2 o'clock in the morning McIntyre ceased fighting the side line of a fire, the head of which had passed northward in the direction the wind was blowing. John Elander, whose place was a mile east of the place of injury, testifies that at half past 2 o'clock in the morning he stood on a hill and could see a little bit of flame or red about three or four miles away. It was "a little north, but mostly straight west of me." This would place the fire about two or three miles west and north of the place of injury, and about four miles north and a little west of where McIntyre was, and in the direction in which he said the fire had gone. No wit-

RIFF v. Garvey.

nesses testified, however, to seeing this fire between these two points. Several witnesses at a distance, who saw reflections in the sky, gave their opinions as to where the fire was, but could not definitely settle its locality. My associates are of the opinion that for the lack of direct evidence upon this point a case has not been made for submission to the jury. I think the testimony justifies the conclusion that the McIntyre fire extended northward; but the doubt is whether there is sufficient evidence that it went as far north as the point where Elander saw the flame, to justify the submission of the question to the jury. As to this point there is grave doubt. Much of the testimony in the case has but little relevancy to the inquiry as to whether the fire passed northward between Pettit's and Ditto's, and on a new trial further facts may be developed upon this question. As is pointed out by the chief justice, the parties seem to have spent much more energy in asserting and denying that the northwest fire caused the injury than upon the principal inquiry whether the Vroman fire ever reached the point where the plaintiff was injured.

I do not concur in several of the deductions drawn in the opinion, but, under all the circumstances, concur in the conclusion reached.

FRANK X. RIFF v. PETER C. GARVEY.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 13,783.

Party Walls: ACTION FOR DAMAGES: EVIDENCE. One who consents to the uncovering of a portion of the roof upon a building belonging to him, to allow one of its walls which is a party wall to be built higher, cannot recover from his co-owner for damages from leakage, unless he proves that the injury resulted from the negligence of the defendant.

ERROR to the district court for Cedar county: GUY T. GRAVES, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

J. C. Robinson, for plaintiff in error.

Millard & Snider, contra.

LETTON, C.

This suit was brought for ejectment and to recover damages for injury to certain property in Hartington, Nebraska. The plaintiff was the owner of a two-story brick building in Hartington, and also a lot of land 25 feet by 50 feet adjoining this building upon the east. He sold this adjoining tract to the defendant, Peter C. Garvey, and also sold and conveyed to him the right to use the east wall of the brick building as a party wall. Garvey proceeded to erect a two story brick building upon the land thus purchased, using the party wall as the west wall of the same. The roof of the plaintiff's building was constructed with a ridge in the center, and the water on the east side of the roof ran off into a gutter or eaves trough that projected over the land Garvey bought, and upon which his building was constructed. In the erection of Garvey's building it was necessary to remove the eaves trough, to roll back the tin roof which covered the top of the party wall for about two feet and to build the wall several feet higher. The plaintiff's first cause of action sets up that the defendant made an unlawful entry upon the east wall, and that he tore up and destroyed the eaves, spouts and gutters, and the roof of the building, thereby causing the rain to come in and destroy the plaintiff's plastering and causing the plaintiff to change the pitch of his roof and the gutters for the flow of water from the roof. The second cause of action alleges that, in consideration of allowing Garvey to close the window in the east wall in the second story of plaintiff's building, Garvey agreed to furnish sufficient light by constructing a skylight in the plaintiff's building; and the third cause of action is in ejectment to oust Garvey from that portion of the party wall which was extended by him higher than it was when the conveyance was

made. By agreement of the parties the third cause of action was withdrawn from the consideration of the jury after they had been instructed by the court. There is no competent evidence in the record to support a verdict for the plaintiff as to the second cause of action, and the verdict of the jury was clearly right upon this issue.

As to the first cause of action, there is evidence to show that the plastering in the plaintiff's building had been injured by water coming through the roof from melting snow at the time that the tin had been rolled back, but the weight of the evidence shows that the removal of the gutters and the rolling back of the tin was done with the knowledge and approval of the plaintiff. Before the Garvey building was begun, other parties had erected a building directly adjoining the plaintiff's upon the south, and he had engaged a man to change the slope of his roof and the direction of the escape of water therefrom so that it would not flow through the gutters on the east side of the building and be discharged at the southeast corner as before. The testimony is conflicting, but we think the greater weight is with the defendant, and the jury so found by their verdict. It appears that the opening was suffered to remain uncovered except by boards for more than a week, and that during this time some leakage occurred, but it is not shown that the defendant was to blame for this condition of affairs. Whatever damage the plaintiff suffered seems to have come from his own carelessness, or from the failure of the man he had previously employed to rebuild that portion of the roof, and not from any wrong upon the part of the defendant.

As to the instructions complained of, three of them bear upon the question of ejectment, which was afterwards withdrawn from the jury by agreement of the parties. We see no error in instruction numbered 12, which tells the jury that the owner of a building has no right to collect or discharge the rainwater which falls upon his roof upon his neighbor's premises. Instruction numbered 13, which tells the jury that a party wall is in law a solid wall with-

out openings, was apparently intended to apply to the issue as to light. The plaintiff was not prejudiced by the giving of this instruction, since in no event could he recover upon this issue under the evidence. We see no valid objections to instruction numbered 14. As to instruction numbered 15, the language is somewhat involved and obscure, but the idea which is conveyed by this instruction, in connection with the others, is that, if the injury to the plastering was caused by a defective and leaky condition of the plaintiff's roof, not created by the defendant's employees loosening the same, the defendant will not be liable. This is a correct statement of the law.

Upon the whole record we find no error prejudicial to the plaintiff. In fact, as the evidence stood at the close of the plaintiff's case, the motion of the defendant to direct a verdict might have been sustained by the trial court without error, since the only positive testimony that the condition of the plastering was caused by the opening of the roof came from one of defendant's witnesses. The question as to the legal right of one of the owners of a party wall built upon land belonging to the other owner to extend the same to a greater height, without the consent of the other proprietor, is not in the case and is not decided.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

GEORGE J. WOODS ET AL. V. LINCOLN GAS & ELECTRIC LIGHT COMPANY.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 13,905.

1. **Taxation: VALUATION BY ASSESSOR: PRESUMPTION.** The valuation of property made by the proper assessing officer is presumed to be correct, and the burden is upon those attacking the same before the board of equalization to show that it should be assessed at a higher rate.
2. The findings of a board of equalization must be so manifestly wrong that reasonable minds could not differ thereon before this court will disturb them. *Field v. Lincoln Traction Co.*, ante, p. 418.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: EDWARD P. HOLMES, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

Allen W. Field and *A. S. Tibbets*, for plaintiffs in error.

H. F. Rose and *E. C. Strobe*, contra.

LETTON, C.

This is a proceeding in error to review the judgment of the district court for Lancaster county in affirming the action of the city council of the city of Lincoln, sitting as a board of equalization, in assessing the value of the personal property of the Lincoln Gas & Electric Light Company for the year 1902. The manager of the company made a return to the assessor that the value of its personal property was \$175,000. This was increased by the tax commissioner of the city to \$300,000. Objections were filed to this assessment with the board of equalization and a hearing had thereon. The board of equalization found that the value as fixed by the tax commissioner was correct, and the district court found no error in the proceedings.

At the outset of the discussion we deem it advisable to say that this court will not usurp the functions of the

tribunals created by law for ascertaining the fair cash value of property for taxation, and will not constitute itself a taxing board or board of equalization. It will examine the errors assigned in the proceedings of the district court in the same manner and to the same extent as in other error proceedings, and the same presumptions will be applied as in other cases. If the evidence is sufficient to support the judgment of the inferior tribunal it will not be disturbed, even though our view of its effect should differ from that of the board of equalization.

A number of errors were made in the admission of evidence before the board of equalization, but in the view we take of this case it is needless to discuss them. The main question in the case is whether or not sufficient evidence was introduced before the board of equalization to warrant that body in changing or modifying the assessed valuation returned by the tax commissioner. We have said that a verdict will not be set aside on the ground of want of sufficient evidence to support it, unless the want is so great as to show that the verdict is manifestly wrong (*Sycamore-Marsh Harvester Co. v. Grundrad*, 16 Neb. 529); and so with the findings of the board of equalization, these must be so manifestly wrong that reasonable minds could not differ thereon before this court will disturb them. *Field v. Lincoln Traction Co.*, ante, p. 418. The valuation made and returned by the tax commissioner is presumed to be correct, and the burden was upon the complainants before the board of equalization to show that the property of the corporation should have been assessed at a higher rate.

The evidence which was relied upon by the complainants consisted mainly of certain facts with reference to bond issues made by the company. It seems that the present corporation was formed as the result of a reorganization of the persons interested in a former corporation named the Lincoln Gas & Electric Company; that an issue of bonds and capital stock of this company

was surrendered at a discount to a reorganization committee, who issued bonds and stock of the present corporation in lieu thereof. There are now outstanding bonds of this company to the par value of \$1,052,000. The testimony upon this branch of the case offers no definite basis upon which to estimate the actual value of the personal property of the corporation. The defendant introduced testimony with reference to the value of certain stocks of merchandise in the city of Lincoln for the purpose of comparison, and also testimony as to the amount it would cost to replace the entire property of the corporation within the city. But, taking the whole evidence together, there is not sufficient data furnished by either party upon which to base a reasonable estimate of the value of this property. This being the case, the determination made by the tax commissioner and the board of equalization must stand.

It may be said that the principal officers of this corporation are nonresidents of the state; that the books and papers from which accurate knowledge might be obtained of the cost or value of the plant were not within the jurisdiction of the board of equalization, and that the resident officers betrayed a remarkable degree of ignorance with reference to the corporate affairs. The errors committed in the admission of evidence were not prejudicial to the complainants, since, taking all the evidence that was furnished in the case, there is not sufficient to justify this court in reversing the judgment of the district court.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and OLDFHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

W. Y. TEETZEL V. DAVIDSON BROTHERS MARBLE COMPANY.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 13,921.

Sales: ACTION. Certain goods shipped by the plaintiff to a bankrupt were stopped in transit. An order upon the carrier was then given by the plaintiff's agent to the defendant, whereby defendant obtained the goods and used them in his business. *Held*, that under the circumstances there was an implied contract upon his part to pay the plaintiff the fair market value of the goods, which could be enforced by an action on the contract.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: IRVING F. BAXTER, JUDGE. Affirmed.

B. F. Thomas and E. R. Duffie, for plaintiff in error.

Richard S. Horton, contra.

LETTON, C.

This is an action for goods sold and delivered. The plaintiff is a corporation doing business in Chicago as a wholesale marble dealer, and the defendant is in the marble business in Council Bluffs. In September, 1900, the plaintiff shipped to one W. E. Lewis, who was then in the marble business in Council Bluffs, the goods the price of which it is sought to recover. Before the goods reached Council Bluffs, Lewis failed and went into bankruptcy. The goods were stopped in transit by the plaintiff, acting through one Benjamin, an attorney of Council Bluffs. While they were lying in the hands of the railroad company at Council Bluffs, together with two other shipments made to Lewis at an earlier date, Benjamin testifies Teetzel was at his office, and that he gave Teetzel copies of certain bills of goods he was notified were at the depot; that Teetzel agreed to take the goods and pay for them, but the price was not definitely agreed upon, and that he gave Teetzel an order on the railroad company for the marble shipped by plaintiff to Lewis. Lewis testifies that Teetzel

paid the freight on all the marble shipped him, took it from the railroad station and used it in his business, and that he was with Teetzel and his employees when this was done. Teetzel denies that he bought this shipment of marble. He testifies that he did buy from Benjamin two other bills that had been shipped to Lewis, and paid for those. He further testifies that this lot of marble, or a part of it, was taken to his place by his drayman Bridenberg; that his men did some work on it under the direction of his foreman, but that this was done for Lewis; that the goods were taken from the railroad company by Lewis, and shipped out by him, and the work upon the marble paid for by Lewis. Upon this conflicting evidence the jury found for the plaintiff, and there is sufficient evidence to support the verdict.

Error is assigned as to the exclusion of certain exhibits. These exhibits all refer to the other two bills of goods shipped to Lewis and taken and paid for by Teetzel. Teetzel testified that he bought and paid for these goods, and that they did not include those the price of which is sued for in this action, which is not disputed by the plaintiff. While the admission of these papers might have been proper, yet the defendant could not be prejudiced by their exclusion, since there was no dispute over the matter they evidenced.

The instructions are complained of as being based upon the theory that there was a contract of sale between the parties, while no such contract was proved. The order upon the railroad company given to Teetzel by Benjamin was to deliver to him "the marble which was shipped by Davidson Bros. Marble Company to W. E. Lewis." It is admitted in defendant's brief that if Teetzel used this order to obtain the goods the price of which is sued for, even if they were not included in the contract of sale, he would be liable for their value, but it is said, "not on a contract, but in tort for a conversion." The plaintiff, however, might waive the tort and sue upon the implied contract of sale, which is what it has done in this case. When the defendant obtained possession of the goods by virtue of the

Tootle-Weakley Millinery Co. v. Billingsley.

order, there was an implied agreement upon his part to pay the plaintiff the reasonable and fair market value of the same. This value was proved at the trial, and upon this implied contract the instructions were based. We find nothing prejudicial to the defendant in the record, and recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

TOOTLE-WEAKLEY MILLINERY COMPANY, APPELLANT, v. E. W. BILLINGSLEY, TRUSTEE, APPELLEE.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 13,928.

1. **Judgment: EQUITY: NEGLIGENCE.** A court of equity will not relieve against a judgment obtained against a party by reason of the negligence of his attorney.
2. **Absence of Reporter: REVIEW.** If a party desires to complain of the absence of the official reporter, he should call the attention of the trial court thereto, obtain a ruling, and if forced to trial without the reporter preserve his exceptions.
3. **Appearance.** If a party who contends that a court has no jurisdiction over his person files a motion for a new trial, he thereby concedes that the court has power to act, and will not be afterwards heard to assert the contrary.
4. **Bankruptcy: SET-OFF.** A party against whom a judgment has been rendered in favor of the trustee of a bankrupt may, by proper proceedings in equity, be allowed to offset against the same a claim allowed in its favor against the bankrupt in the bankruptcy proceedings.

APPEAL from the district court for Lancaster county:
EDWARD P. HOLMES, JUDGE. *Affirmed and remanded with directions.*

Wilson & Brown, for appellant.

Joseph E. Philpott, contra.

LEITON, C.

This is an appeal from an equitable action instituted by the appellant in the district court for Lancaster county to obtain a new trial in a certain cause pending in that court, and in which judgment was entered on the 2d day of April, 1903, against the appellant and in favor of L. W. Billingsley, trustee. In January, 1900, the appellant filed in the district court for Lancaster county his petition against the Globe Savings Bank, and certain sureties upon a bond given to the state of Nebraska to pay the debts of said savings bank, and against Sadie E. Puckett. The petition alleged, in substance, that Sadie E. Puckett had deposited certain money in said savings bank; that she had assigned her passbook and account to the Tootle-Weakley Millinery Company; that the bank was insolvent, and that the sureties were liable for the amount of the deposit. After this petition was filed, Sadie E. Puckett was adjudged a bankrupt, and L. W. Billingsley was appointed as trustee of her estate. On May 8, 1902, the trustee obtained leave to file an answer and cross-petition to the petition of the Tootle-Weakley Millinery Company, within ten days. On February 3, 1903, without further leave of court, Billingsley, trustee, filed an answer and cross-petition. The cross-petition alleged that the passbook was the property of Sadie E. Puckett; that it came into the possession of the Tootle-Weakley Millinery Company without her knowledge or consent; alleged a demand for its return, and refusal; that it was of the value of \$500; and prayed judgment for its value. No notice of the filing of this cross-petition was served upon the appellant, but on March 10 the plaintiff was given five days to plead to the same. On the 19th of March the default of

the plaintiff to the cross-petition was entered; and the record recites that on the 2d day of April, 1903, the parties appeared by their attorneys, a trial had to the court without the intervention of a jury, the same being waived by agreement in open court; and a finding in favor of Billingsley, trustee, upon the cause of action set forth in the cross-petition was made, and a judgment for \$532.64 was rendered against the plaintiff. The next day, during the same term of court, a motion for a new trial was filed by W. T. Stevens, acting as attorney for the plaintiff, alleging, as grounds therefor, that the court was without jurisdiction over the plaintiff; that no service of process was had upon the cross-petition; that the judgment was rendered without notice and after the jury was discharged; alleging the usual grounds that the judgment was contrary to law, and to the evidence, etc.; and, further, that the defendant was guilty of fraud and deception in her testimony. This motion for a new trial was overruled, and the court adjourned April 6, 1903. The plaintiff was given 40 days to prepare a bill of exceptions. An application was made to the court to prepare a bill of exceptions within this time, but it appears that no notes of the evidence were taken at the trial and the plaintiff was unable to procure such bill.

The appellant contends that the default judgment was rendered without jurisdiction. The record shows an appearance by its attorneys at the time of the trial, and active participation therein by the agreement to waive a jury. It is alleged, however, that these allegations are untrue. Even if so, the duly authorized attorney for the appellant appeared in court the next day and filed a motion for a new trial, which motion was acted upon by the court, and exception taken. Having invoked the powers of the court to set aside the default judgment, the appellant thereby admitted its jurisdiction. It cannot consistently say that the court had no jurisdiction in the proceedings, and at the same time pray for the exercise of its powers for its own benefit. The appearance made by the

attorney at this time gave jurisdiction as to the entire proceedings. *Fisk v. Thorp*, 60 Neb. 713.

Appellant's second contention is that there was no evidence to support the judgment. This point could properly have been raised upon error proceedings from the original judgment, and offers no reason for granting a new trial by a court of equity.

Appellant's third contention is that the plaintiff had an absolute right to depend upon the official reporter to take the evidence, and, when called upon, to prepare a bill of exceptions. The evidence shows that W. T. Stevens, the attorney for the plaintiff, knew of the order made by the court giving the plaintiff leave to answer the cross-petition. The record shows that he was present at the time of the trial. It is true the petition alleges that this entry is incorrect and that no attorney was present, but we are compelled to accept the record as true in this proceeding. If any mistake was made by the clerk, the plaintiff should have applied to the court under the provisions of sections 602 *et seq.* of the code to have the same corrected so as to show the facts. It would establish an evil precedent if we should permit the records of the district court to be corrected by proceedings in equity to obtain a new trial. If the record could be contradicted in a proceeding of this nature, no faith could be placed in the verity and finality of judicial proceedings, until the time fixed by the statute of limitations to bring such actions had expired. The remedy provided by the statute for such corrections is ample and there is no reason why it should not be followed. If the plaintiff was present at the trial, the absence of the official reporter should have been called to the attention of the court, and, if an order for his attendance was refused, that fact should have been preserved in the record. We have held that a party is justified in relying upon the court reporter for a transcript of the oral proceedings at the trial, and that if, without fault on his part, such transcript cannot be furnished nor a bill of exceptions prepared, a court of

equity will, in a proper case, grant a new trial. In this case Mr. Stevens testifies that the judge spoke to him about this cross-petition in the court house, and that he told him it was doubtful whether he would make any further appearance. He thinks this was just before judgment was entered, and the testimony of Judge Frost and of Mr. Philpott shows that Mr. Stevens was aware that an effort would be made to obtain a judgment against his clients upon the cross-petition during that term of the court, which was just about to expire. It is a settled principle of law that a court of equity will not relieve against a judgment obtained against a party by reason of the negligence of his attorney. *Funk v. Kansas Mfg. Co.*, 53 Neb. 450; *Scott v. Wright*, 50 Neb. 849; *Losey v. Neidig*, 52 Neb. 167. If the appellant's attorney was present at the trial and did not object to the absence of the official reporter, he cannot now seek a new trial upon that ground. It was his duty to call the attention of the trial court thereto, to obtain a ruling, and, if adverse, to preserve his exceptions. As the record now stands, it appears that the attorney failed to do this, and hence is in no position to urge it to a court of equity as ground for a new trial. The fact may be that he was not present, but as to this we are concluded by the record as it now stands.

The appellant prays for alternative relief, and asks, if it is held that it is not entitled to a new trial and the judgment is not set aside, that it may be allowed to set off against the judgment a balance remaining unpaid upon its allowed claim against the estate of Sadie E. Puckett. It argues that this claim was allowed in the bankruptcy proceedings; that this allowance is of the nature of a judgment, and that it is peculiarly within the province of a court of equity to set off one judgment against another. It appears that the appellant filed its claim in the bankruptcy proceedings for the sum of \$2,293.60, which claim was allowed. This debt was secured by a mortgage upon certain real estate. Foreclosure proceedings were afterwards had, which resulted in a sale of the land and the

payment of \$2,000 upon the debt. There is still unpaid on the allowed claim an amount which, together with interest, exceeds the amount of the judgment.

It has been urged that this is not the forum in which the appellant can have relief, but that it should be referred to the bankruptcy court, which alone has jurisdiction. At the time of the hearing upon the allowance of the appellant's claim in the bankruptcy court, the claim made by Mrs. Puckett against the appellant for the conversion of her passbook and money was not urged by her or her trustee as a ground of set-off against the appellant's claim. That court therefore could not act upon it, even if it had possessed jurisdiction to pass upon the validity of an unliquidated claim for damages. Nor can appellant at this time be given any relief in the bankruptcy court, since its claim stands in the same condition as that of other creditors. It is adjudicated, and nothing remains to be done with it except to apportion to it its *pro rata* share of the assets of the bankrupt estate. With the judgment the case is different; unless the set-off is allowed, the appellant will be compelled to pay the whole amount of the judgment, and to receive in return upon its allowed claim only a small percentage of what is due to it from the bankrupt. The allowance of the appellant's claim against the bankrupt's estate has all of the finality of a judgment. We have, then, two adjudicated demands, one in favor of the bankrupt's estate and one against it. We have held that the appellant is not entitled to a new trial, and the case, as it now stands, is a suit in equity to set off one judgment against another. This is the usual and ordinary manner of obtaining relief of this nature. It is not in every case that a court of equity will set off mutual demands which are distinct and independent of each other, but the insolvency of one party is a circumstance which strongly appeals to a court of conscience to apply the rule. If the result of the refusal would deprive one party of his property for the benefit of others to whom he is under no obligation, this will justify the granting of

the relief prayed. *Boyer v. Clark*, 3 Neb. 161; *Wilbur v. Jeep*, 37 Neb. 604; *Richardson v. Doty*, 44 Neb. 73. The instant case is a strong one for the application of the rule. Considering the nature of the claim for which the judgment was rendered, the facts as to the manner of its rendition, and the entire situation of the parties, it seems clear to us that equity demands that the appellant should be permitted to set off the balance due it upon its allowed claim against the judgment.

As to the contention that the matter should be determined by the bankruptcy court, and not by this court, the rule is that the party desiring the set-off must move in the court where the judgment against him was recovered, because that is the court that controls the judgment. *Black, Judgments*, sec. 1,002. It is also true that suits to set off a judgment of one court against the judgment of another are equitable in their nature, and usually must be brought in a court of chancery. *Thrall v. Omaha Hotel Co.*, 5 Neb. 295; *Stenberg v. State*, 48 Neb. 299. It is another elementary rule that, where a court of chancery has obtained jurisdiction of a controversy for certain purposes, it will retain the same until full justice and equity have been done between the parties. Why should the appellant be compelled to have recourse to another court to obtain relief which the present forum has full power to grant? No good reason has been assigned, and we think none can be given.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed so far as the refusal to grant a new trial is concerned, but that the cause be remanded, with directions to the district court to ascertain the amount due the appellant upon its allowed claim and to set off the same against the judgment.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is affirmed so

Fitch v. Martin.

far as the refusal to grant a new trial is concerned, and the cause is remanded, with directions to the district court to ascertain the amount due the appellant upon its allowed claim and to set off the same against the judgment.

JUDGMENT ACCORDINGLY.

F. W. FITCH v. EUCLID MARTIN, AMINISTRATOR.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 13,937.

1. **Contract: CONTINUANCE OF SERVICES.** If a contract of employment by the year has been entered into for a definite period, continued service of the same nature rendered from year to year after this period has expired, without any other contract being shown, will be presumed to have been performed under the original contract.
2. **Evidence: COPY OF ACCOUNT.** An admission by a deceased person that an account kept in a certain book is correct is not sufficient to warrant the admission in evidence of a copy of this account in another book.
3. **Verdict: EVIDENCE.** A verdict will not be set aside on the ground of want of sufficient evidence to support it, unless the want is so great as to show that the verdict is manifestly wrong.
4. **Witness: COMPETENCY.** A person who has filed a claim against the estate of a deceased person for legal services performed under a yearly contract is not incompetent to testify as to certain independent acts which he performed when the deceased had no personal connection with the act, and as to which the deceased did not participate.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: EDMUND M. BARTLETT, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

A. S. Churchill, for plaintiff in error.

F. H. Gaines and *E. R. Duffie*, *contra.*

LEITON, C.

In September, 1902, Robert Major, who was a resident of Douglas county, Nebraska, died testate in South Carolina.

Fitch v. Martin.

Euclid Martin was appointed administrator of his estate. A claim was filed by F. W. Fitch in the county court for Douglas county, alleging that the deceased was indebted to him on account of professional services rendered by him as an attorney at law, under a parol contract entered into in October, 1893, for the employment of Fitch at the yearly salary of \$500, and alleging that on or about the 1st day of January, 1895, it was agreed between them that the compensation should be \$400 a year instead of \$500. The claimant further alleges that services were performed under said contract during each year down to the death of Major on September 13, 1902; the payment of a part of the amount claimed in the lifetime of Major, and that the sum of \$3,450 is owing on said contract from the estate of the deceased to the plaintiff. The administrator answered, denying every allegation in the plaintiff's petition, alleging a settlement during Major's lifetime, pleading that all claims for services rendered more than four years before the claim was filed are barred by the statute of limitation, and specifically denying that any services were rendered after October, 1898. The reply denies the settlement, and denies payment, except so far as stated in the petition. Upon the trial, after the evidence of both parties had been produced, the district court instructed the jury to return a verdict for the defendant, which was done, and judgment was rendered dismissing plaintiff's cause of action. A number of errors are assigned, but it will only be necessary to consider a few.

The first error assigned is that the court erred in sustaining objections made to a question asked the witness Karbach. Karbach had testified that in October, 1893, he heard a conversation between Major and Fitch concerning the making of a contract for the employment of Fitch. He was then asked what that conversation was; to which objection was made as immaterial and irrelevant, and for the further reason that any contract made at that time would be barred by the statute of limitations. The objection was sustained, and exception taken. Plaintiff,

however, did not make any offer to prove the facts which were sought to be elicited by the question, hence is in no position to complain of this ruling. *Alter v. Covey*, 45 Neb. 508. We may say, however, that we think the evidence sought was proper, since, even if a contract had been entered into for employment by the year at a time beyond the period limited by the statute in which recovery for services might be had, evidence of continued service of this same nature from year to year, without any other contract being shown, will be presumed to be under the original contract, and it is proper to receive such evidence to furnish the foundation of the plaintiff's claim. *Kellogg v. Citizens Ins. Co.*, 94 Wis. 554, 69 N. W. 362; *Tatterson v. Suffolk Mfg. Co.*, 106 Mass. 56; *Tallon v. Grand Portage Copper Mining Co.*, 55 Mich. 147; *Sines v. Superintendents of the Poor for Wayne County*, 58 Mich. 503, 25 N. W. 485; *Dickinson v. Norwegian Plow Co.*, 101 Wis. 157, 76 N. W. 1108.

It is next urged that the court erred in sustaining the objection to exhibit numbered 2. Exhibit numbered 2 is a book which contains a number of pages of charges against Major made by Fitch from November, 1892, to June, 1902; the first entries being charges for specific services rendered, and the remaining pages apparently being memoranda of professional services performed each year, with a charge of \$400 for each year up to the time of Major's death. Mrs. Dunham, who was Fitch's stenographer, testifies that Fitch kept this book for Major; that she remembers the first time that Major went over the account he said to Fitch he would like to have him make a copy of it, so that he could have it to take with him whenever he wanted it; that Fitch gave the book to Major, and that Major took it away, and then afterwards brought it back; that he had it once or twice; that when Fitch did not have the book Major had it. It is not contended that Major ever made an admission of the correctness of the entries in this book, but it is urged that it is a copy of another record which was introduced in evidence; that Major agreed to the correctness of the entries in this other account book, and that consequently

this was an admission of the account in this book, and made it competent evidence as an admission. These facts, if true, would entitle the other account to be admitted in evidence, which was done, but furnish no ground for the admission of a copy of that account. The fact that the witness does not testify that any objection or complaint was ever made by Major in her hearing to the entries in this book does not amount to the dignity of an admission by Major that the charges therein made against him were correct, and we think that the ruling of the court was proper when it excluded this evidence.

The principal error complained of is that the trial court erred in directing the jury to return a verdict for the defendant. To determine this point requires an examination of the evidence. It appears from the evidence that Major and Fitch, prior to the time that they lived in Omaha, had both lived in Atlantic, Iowa; that Major, while living in Atlantic, was a man of family, engaged in the lumber and building material business; that he was worth at that time from \$50,000 to \$70,000; that afterwards his wife died, and he moved to Omaha, where he lived alone. Fitch testifies that Major was worth about \$50,000 when he came to Omaha. Major obtained employment in the postoffice, and was apparently classed as a jaintor, though the work he did was more in the nature of being custodian of certain post office supplies. Charles Karbach testifies that he first knew Major in October, 1893; that Fitch's office at that time was on the fourth floor of the Karbach Block, of which the witness had charge; that Major used to go frequently to Fitch's office, averaging two or three calls a week for ten years; that in 1894 he heard a conversation between Major and Fitch with reference to Fitch's employment as attorney; that in that conversation Fitch wanted to charge Major \$500 a year for services, but Major objected, and that they finally agreed that it should be \$500 up to the next year and \$400 a year from then on. He says that after that he was frequently in Fitch's office when Major was talking with Fitch about lands or the

examination of title; that at one time Major went away and was gone for some time, and that after he came back he would be up there two, three or four times a-week. He says that in 1896 he saw a note given by one Page turned over to Fitch by Major, and that Major told Fitch to collect the note and take his fees out of it. John A. Meyer, who was the janitor in the Karbach Block, says that he was working on the elevator in 1898; that Major came to see Fitch sometimes every day, sometimes twice a day and sometimes he would not see him oftener than twice a week. Mrs. Dunham testifies that she began to work for Fitch as his stenographer in 1898, and worked for him in 1901; that she first saw Major at Fitch's office in November, 1898, and at that time Fitch was looking up taxes and abstracts and deeds to real estate for Major; that one day she heard a conversation between a man named Siltz and Major with reference to some property; that Siltz made a remark which she did not hear, but she heard Major say in reply: "No, I am paying Fitch \$400 a year for my work, and it is right that he should do this." She further testifies that she has seen Major and Fitch go over their book account in the book marked exhibit numbered 1 on pages 77 and 78; that after they had been looking over the account together in December, 1898, Fitch collected some money for Major; that Major paid Fitch \$50 of it, and told him to give him credit for that on his account. She further testifies that she heard a conversation in which Major gave Fitch the Page note, but that Fitch did not get the money on this note, and he gave it back to Major, and Major told him to charge it up to his account; that he expected some money pretty soon from his brother's estate, and he would settle up with Fitch; that Major went south about the first of July, 1899, was gone until November, 1900, and that Major wrote Fitch while he was gone. She testifies, further, as to several trips made by Fitch for Major. On cross-examination as to the account she testifies that Major wanted to see it, and said that as far as he knew everything appeared all right. She could not say,

however, whether it was on page 77 or some other page, but knows it was in the same book. John P. Finley, who had an office in the Karbach Block, testifies that he knew of Fitch doing business for Major; that he saw Major in Fitch's office frequently. Robert Herrick testifies that before Major received his inheritance from his brother he owned a number of vacant lots and other property that was of no great value; that from 1894 on Major was buying and selling property and trading; that he was in Herrick's office nearly every day for two years; that he looked up titles and abstracts for him, and that he now has a claim against the estate for this work; that Major did a good deal of outside business that he did not know anything about; that in 1899 Major received property from his brother's estate. The witness testifies that he learned from Major that Fitch had this claim against him; that he learned this before Major went south and before he inherited this money. W. R. Buck was acquainted with Fitch and Major, and testifies that at one time he showed Major some property which he was trying to sell him; that he told Major he would furnish an abstract, and let his attorney look it over and see whether it was all right or not; and that Major said that Fitch looked after his abstract business and all that kind of thing—all his transactions. This was in October or November, 1901. He testifies, further, that he had often seen Major in Fitch's office, and other witnesses testify that they often saw Major and Fitch together at Fitch's office. Mr. Hutchison testifies that he had known Major for 27 years; that in the last part of 1898 he tried to sell Major a house and lot adjoining his own; that he had a conversation with him in regard to selling the property, and that in the course of the conversation Major said that he was paying Fitch \$400 a year to do his business. This witness came from the same place as Fitch and Major, had known Fitch since he was a boy, and knew Major as a lumber dealer in Atlantic. He said he would often find Major in Fitch's office. Exhibit numbered 1, which was admitted in evi-

Fitch v. Martin.

dence, consists of two pages of a book of account. The entries from 1894 to 1902, inclusive, consist of one entry for each year in the form of a summary of services performed, with a single charge of \$400 for each year's services. The defendant introduced evidence to show that Major left a large number of papers among his effects, in none of which was there any reference to Fitch or anything whatever regarding Fitch. The administrator testifies that Fitch came to him and told him that if he was employed as attorney for the estate he would present no claim, but this is denied by Fitch. Other testimony was introduced tending to prove that up to the time that Major received the property from his brother's estate he had very little property, mostly vacant lots or wild lands in western Nebraska, all of which was of little value; that he was employed in the post office during all this time, and that it was necessary for him to be there practically all the time that the post office was open. Certain other evidence was received as to whether the books of account offered at this trial were introduced in evidence in the county court at the hearing before the county judge. As to this there was a conflict of testimony.

The administrator urges that, this being a claim against the estate of a deceased person, it should be carefully scrutinized and only admitted upon very satisfactory proof, and that there is no satisfactory proof whatever of a single service rendered the deceased by the claimant as his attorney during the entire period he asserts his employment continued. In this connection his counsel have ably discussed in the briefs and oral argument the weight and credibility of the evidence, have pointed out inconsistencies between the testimony of the witnesses Karbach and Mrs. Dunham, and have called the attention of the court to the improbability of other facts which have been testified to by the plaintiff's witnesses. These considerations were proper to have been urged to a jury, and might have great weight in affecting the minds of the jurors as to the justness of the claim. Granting, however, all that has

been urged in this connection, the fact remains that there is evidence which tends at least to support a part of plaintiff's case. We have testimony that a contract was made between Major and Fitch for legal services to be performed for an annual compensation of \$400. We have testimony that Fitch performed some services; that Major told several parties that Fitch was his attorney and attended to his business, and one witness testifies that Major told him he was paying Fitch \$400 a year to act as his attorney. It is true there are inconsistencies between the stories of different witnesses, and that there may be considerable doubt as to certain of the facts testified to, when we take into consideration Major's circumstances. But, even as to Major's financial condition during the years prior to the receipt of the inheritance from his brother, there is a conflict in the evidence, and the whole matter was one for the jury to determine, and not for the court. We think that in the laudable zeal of the trial court to preserve the deceased's estate it overlooked the principle that questions of fact are for the jury, and that, if the testimony upon the part of the plaintiff alone, viewed in the light most favorable to him, would support a verdict, he is entitled to have the whole matter submitted to a jury. While the evidence is not free from doubt, we cannot say that it would not support a verdict. Counsel for the administrator, if the case were submitted to a jury, would be entitled to present to that body as forcibly and clearly the objections to the weight and credibility of the evidence as they have done in their brief and argument before this court, and there is no reason to suppose that they would not receive proper and due consideration.

Error is assigned on account of the exclusion by the court of the testimony of Fitch with reference to what he did concerning the examination of title to certain property belonging to the deceased; and also as to the exclusion of evidence showing that Fitch made several journeys to different localities for the purpose of examining into the title to lands situated there; also as to whether

Fitch v. Martin.

or not he examined certain abstracts. All this testimony was objected to and excluded upon the ground that it involved a personal transaction with the deceased. The question is whether this testimony is a "transaction" between the deceased person and the witness. We have said that the word "transaction," as used in the code, embraces every variety of affairs the subject of negotiations, actions or contracts between the parties. *Smith v. Perry*, 52 Neb. 738. The witness Fitch did not testify that any contract was ever entered into between him and the deceased with reference to his employment as counsel or attorney, and the matters which it was sought to elicit by this proffered testimony were independent facts, which, standing alone, would have no probative value in the case. The fact that the plaintiff made a trip to Atlantic, Iowa, or that he examined a certain abstract, if unaccompanied by any testimony on his part that this was done in consequence of a contract of employment with the deceased or at the deceased's request, would not be a transaction with the deceased. The testimony might corroborate the evidence given by other witnesses as to the existence of a transaction, but it would not be evidence of the transaction itself. To illustrate: A contractor might agree to build a house for a person who afterwards died. After the house was built and the death of the person with whom he contracted, the builder could not testify as to the making of any contract or agreement with reference to the building of the house, but there is nothing in the statute which would prevent him from testifying that he actually built a house upon a certain lot of ground. Unless this evidence was connected with the deceased by the testimony of other witnesses showing that the house was built upon this ground at the request of or with the knowledge of the deceased, no recovery could be had. The testimony of the contractor that the house was built would not be proof of a transaction with the deceased and would not be incompetent under the rule.

In the case of *Lerche v. Brasher*, 104 N. Y. 157, 10 N. E.

58, the court held, in an action against an executor by an attorney to recover for services rendered his testator, where the employment has been competently proved, the plaintiff may describe the things which he did, provided such acts were done in the absence of the deceased and without his immediate or personal participation, and the deceased, if living, could not, for that reason, contradict such testimony. In that case the attorney was permitted to testify that he went to an office and got the papers in a case in which deceased was a party, and went to Albany to prepare the case with another attorney for the court of appeals. The court was of the opinion that these were independent facts in which the deceased was not personally a participator, and which, if living, he could not for that reason have contradicted. They might have been done without his authority or knowledge, and did not necessarily involve a personal transaction with him. And so, in this case, any examination of title by Fitch or journeys to other points made by him upon business, the nature of which is shown to be connected with the deceased's affairs and as to which the deceased did not personally participate, are proper to be admitted in evidence as independent facts. The line, however, should be carefully drawn by the trial court, so that the protection thrown around the estate of deceased persons by the statute may be preserved, and yet the rights of the living be not interfered with. Where the act was one with which the deceased had no personal connection so far as disclosed by the evidence of the interested witness, it is admissible, if it tends to establish the truth of the claim he makes; but, if any act or conversation of the deceased is involved, the statute excludes it.

Under these considerations, we recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed.

AMES and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

REVERSED.

LEXINGTON BANK V. PHENIX INSURANCE COMPANY ET AL.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 13,865.

Debt: CANCELLATION: PRESUMPTION. In the absence of evidence, an agent for collection who cancels the obligation of the debtor is presumed to have done so in consideration of the face amount of the claim.

ERROR to the district court for Dawson county: BRUNO O. HOSTETLER, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

E. A. Cook, for plaintiff in error.

W. W. Leek and *H. D. Rhea*, *contra.*

AMES, O.

The Phenix Insurance Company recovered a judgment against John Everson, which was assigned by its attorneys without consideration, but for collection only, to the Lexington bank, and the assignment was afterwards ratified by the company. After the assignment, Everson sued the bank upon a money demand for \$800, and the bank pleaded set-offs, including the judgment, to the aggregate amount of about \$1,000. The suit never came to trial, but was settled and dismissed, and as a part of the settlement the bank satisfied and discharged of record the insurance company's judgment. What specific gain or advantage the bank obtained in the settlement by reason of such discharge is not shown by the evidence, and as to whether Everson was at the time pecuniarily responsible there is some conflict; but we think the latter question is immaterial. In the absence of evidence, an agent for col-

lection who cancels the obligation of the debtor must be presumed to have done so in consideration of the face amount of the claim. This is an action by the insurance company against the bank to recover the amount of the judgment and interest. There is a conflict in the evidence as to whether the judgment was purchased and owned by the bank, or assigned to it for collection as alleged in the petition, but the jury determined this and all other issues in favor of the plaintiff, and returned a verdict accordingly, upon which a judgment was rendered, which this proceeding is prosecuted to reverse.

The plaintiff in error complains of the action of the court in the giving and refusal of instructions, but the main contention of counsel is that the verdict is unsupported by evidence. We are not only not able to agree with him, but are of opinion that it is the only verdict which the evidence would have supported, and that errors in instructions, if there are any, were without prejudice.

We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

LETTON and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

AFFIRMED.

JOHNSON COUNTY V. CHAMBERLAIN BANKING HOUSE ET AL.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 13,911.

1. **Counties: RIGHT TO SUE.** A county in its corporate character is a competent and proper party to sue for the enforcement of all contracts and obligations in its behalf, unless the statute expressly provides otherwise. This right is not impaired by the fact that the obligation may be, or is required by law to be, discharged by payment of a liquidated sum to the county treasurer or to his order, upon demand.

2. Pleading. A petition which alleges that a contract of a corporation was made, executed and delivered by it by its officer and agent, naming him, is not demurrable on the ground that authority by the agent does not sufficiently appear.

ERROR to the district court for Johnson county: ALBERT H. BABCOCK, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

J. C. Moore and Hugh La Master, for plaintiff in error.

L. C. Chapman, J. B. Douglas, Frank L. Dinsmore, S. P. Davidson and Ed. M. Tracy, contra.

AMES, C.

This is an action against the principal and sureties upon a bond executed pursuant to the statute to secure the deposit of moneys by the treasurer of Johnson county in the defendant bank. The district court sustained a demurrer and dismissed the action upon the two grounds: First, that the plaintiff was without right to maintain suit upon the instrument for a breach of its conditions, upholding the contention of the defendants that the county treasurer, being the sole official custodian of county funds, can alone prosecute an action. We think the objection is clearly insufficient. The statute expressly provides, and this court has repeatedly held, that the treasurer is not the custodian of and is not responsible for the safe-keeping of moneys deposited in a bank pursuant to the statute, if the bank has given a bond as the law prescribes. *In re State Treasurer's Settlement*, 51 Neb. 116; *County of Hall v. Thomssen*, 63 Neb. 787. When a bank has executed such a bond as the statute prescribes, the duty of the treasurer to deposit the public funds therein becomes an imperative one, performance of which will, if necessary, be compelled by mandamus (*State v. Bartley*, 39 Neb. 353), and the relation between the bank and the county becomes the ordinary one of debtor and creditor. We think that neither argument nor citation of authority is requisite for the support of the proposition that the county in its corporate capacity

Walters v. Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co.

is a competent and proper party to sue for the enforcement of all contracts and obligations in its behalf, unless the statute expressly provides otherwise. This right is not impaired by the fact that the obligation may be, or is required by law to be, discharged by payment of a liquidated sum to the treasurer or to his order, upon demand.

The second ground of demurrer is that the bond, a copy of which is set out in the petition, was signed by the corporate name of the principal, "by Charles M. Chamberlain, Cash."; and it is urged that it does not sufficiently appear that Chamberlain had authority to execute the instrument. That, however, is an objection to be made by answer and evidence, and not by demurrer. The petition alleges, in substance, that the corporation by its cashier made, executed and delivered the bond for the uses and upon the considerations pleaded. If such is the fact the bank, which can contract only by its agents, is, without doubt, bound, and the fact, in the present state of the case, stands admitted upon the face of the record.

We recommend therefore that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

LETTON and OLDFHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

REVERSED.

MARY A. WALTERS, v. CHICAGO, BURLINGTON & QUINCY
RAILWAY COMPANY.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 13,922.

Insurance: ELECTION. When the certificate of membership in a railway relief department expressly provides that the indemnity therein provided shall be waived or forfeited by an action for

damages against the railway company itself, the terms of the contract, and not the general rules of law relative to the election of remedies, will determine the consequences of such an election.

ERROR to the district court for Red Willow county:
ROBERT C. ORR, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

J. F. Cordeal, C. H. Boyle and Berge, Morning & Ledwith, for plaintiff in error.

W. S. Morlan, J. W. Dewcse and F. E. Bishop, contra.

AMES, C.

There is no dispute of fact and but a single question of law involved in this case, which is a proceeding in error for the reversal of a judgment for the defendant in the district court. The action is against the relief or insurance department of the defendant company for a recovery by a beneficiary named in a certificate of membership on account of the accidental death of a member, and was submitted at the trial upon a stipulation of facts of which the following is a copy:

"It is hereby stipulated and agreed by and between the plaintiff and the defendant in the above entitled action: (1) That the defendant, the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railway Company, is a corporation duly organized and existing under the laws of the state of Iowa, and that as such it has possession and control of the lines of railroad formerly owned and controlled by the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Company, running from Chicago through the state of Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska and elsewhere. That there exists in connection with said railway company what is known as the Burlington Voluntary Relief Department, originally organized by the employees of, and in connection with, the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad Company, and that the defendant railway company has succeeded to all the obligations and liabilities of the said railroad company in connection with said relief department and is responsible for any and all

obligations and liabilities of said railroad company under the same terms and conditions of contracts of members in the said relief department as they exist with the railroad company. (2) That on the 23d day of September, 1897, said Burlington Voluntary Relief Department issued and delivered to one Edward Walters its certificate No. 40,991, which is attached hereto as a part hereof, marked 'Exhibit A.' That the said Edward Walters was a member of the Burlington Voluntary Relief Department in good standing at the time of his death. That he was killed by an engine and cars operated by the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Company, while an employee of said company, on the 6th day of October, 1898. That the deceased at the time of his death left no widow or issue or father, but did leave surviving him his mother, the plaintiff herein, as his beneficiary under the terms and conditions of his membership in said relief department. (3) That under the contract and rules and regulations governing the membership of said Edward Walters he became a member of the second class, and his beneficiary was entitled to a death benefit in the sum of \$500, in accordance with the terms of said contract and rules and regulations governing the membership. (4) That a copy of the regulations of said relief department is attached hereto, marked 'Exhibit B,' and made a part hereof. That the certificate of membership in said relief department was issued to said Edward Walters upon an application made and executed by him in the form as prescribed by section 33 of the regulations, a copy of which application is hereto attached and made a part hereof, marked 'Exhibit C.' (5) That the plaintiff was on the 19th day of June, 1899, duly appointed administratrix of the estate of Edward Walters, deceased, and thereafter, to wit, on or about the 1st day of March, 1900, the plaintiff as such administratrix commenced an action in the district court for Greeley county, Nebraska, against the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Company to recover the sum of \$5,000 as damages sustained on account of the death of her said son, Edward Walters; that said cause

was removed to the circuit court of the United States for the district of Nebraska, and was there tried on its merits; that on said trial it was pleaded and proved by the defendant that it was in nowise responsible or liable to the plaintiff in said action in damages by reason of the death of the said Edward Walters, and on the 24th day of October, 1900, judgment was duly rendered in said action in favor of the defendant therein and against the plaintiff therein, finally and conclusively determining and adjudicating that the said defendant was not responsible or liable in damages for the death of said Edward Walters, and that the plaintiff had no legal right to recover any damages whatever from the defendant by reason of his death; and that the said defendant should go hence without day and recover of the plaintiff therein its costs expended in said cause. That an appeal was duly taken from said judgment by the plaintiff as administratrix of the estate of Edward Walters, deceased, to the supreme court of the United States, and on or about the 14th day of April, 1902, the judgment of the lower court was affirmed by the supreme court of the United States, and a judgment on mandate rendered in the circuit court of the United States for the district of Nebraska against the plaintiff for costs in said proceedings. That said judgment has never been vacated, set aside, canceled or modified in any way, and still stands in full force and effect as a valid adjudication of a claim of plaintiff as administratrix in that proceeding to recover damages against the said railroad company. (6) No judgment for damages by reason of the death of said Edward Walters has been rendered in any action in said federal court, or any other court, against the defendant and in favor of the plaintiff. (7) That no demand was ever made by this plaintiff, or any one for her, for the payment of the death benefit provided in said contract of membership, until after the final adjudication of the said action brought by the administratrix of said estate for damages as above set forth, and no death benefit has ever been paid by the defendant company, or its

successor, on account of the death of said Edward Walters."

The clause in the regulations of the department mentioned as "Exhibit B" in the foregoing stipulation, and upon which the defendant relies, and which the lower court adjudged as in the circumstances of the case a sufficient defense, is as follows:

"If any suit shall be brought against the company, or any other company associated therewith as aforesaid, for damages arising from or growing out of injury or death occurring to a member, the benefits otherwise payable and all obligations of the relief department and of the company created by the membership of such member in the relief fund shall thereupon be forfeited, without any declaration or other act by the relief department or the company."

The ingenious argument of counsel for the plaintiff in error succinctly stated is this: It is a settled rule of law, established by the decisions of this and many other courts, that the doctrine of the election of remedies is inapplicable in an instance in which the facts alleged or the nature of the obligation asserted in the former and latter suits are not mutually inconsistent. Hence, it is argued, using the circumstances of the present litigation for an illustration, the plaintiff had a right to recover either from the railway company or from the relief department upon the facts which are agreed in the stipulation to have occurred, and the single additional fact of negligence alleged in the unsuccessful suit against the former is supplemental to but in no respect or particular inconsistent with all or any of such agreed facts, and the rule is invoked that, in the absence of such inconsistency, one is not barred of his real remedy merely because he has mistakenly sought the use of one to which he was not entitled or which the law did not give him. About these rules of law there is no dispute or doubt, but we think that the argument of counsel is fallacious, and that they are inapplicable to this case. It is true, as has been held by this court in cases cited by counsel, that upon

the happening of an accidental injury or death to a member, for which his certificate provides indemnity, he or his beneficiary has an election whether such indemnity shall be demanded from the relief department or whether an action in tort shall be prosecuted against the railway company, and, for the purpose of determining whether such an election has been made, the rules of evidence relative to the general doctrine of the election of remedies are applicable. *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Bigley*, 1 Neb. (Unof.) 225; *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Olsen*, 70 Neb. 559. But the consequences of an election in two classes of cases may be very different. It may be that if the contract sued upon had omitted any reference to such consequences the position of counsel would have been tenable. That is to say, if the railroad company and its relief department are substantially identical, and the certificate of membership had simply provided indemnity in case of the death of the deceased, it may be (we do not decide) that an unsuccessful action in tort would not have barred a subsequent suit on the contract, but in this instance the regulations which are a part of the contract expressly covenant that an action in tort shall operate as a bar. In the absence of the contract, no suit would have been maintained against the relief department at all, and, of course, none can now be maintained against it except such as the contract gives, and under such circumstances as it prescribes. The plaintiff was quite as much at liberty to choose whether she would sue the railway company or the relief department as she would have been in any other imaginable case, but the consequences of such choice are to be determined, not by the general rules of law, but by the terms of the contract by which the deceased had bound himself and her.

We recommend therefore that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

LETTON and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing

Miller v. Loverene & Browne Co.

opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

AFFIRMED.

H. E. MILLER V. LOVERENE & BROWNE COMPANY.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 13,923.

1. **Error Without Prejudice.** When the answer fails to state a defense, but admits the plaintiff's cause of action, and the verdict and judgment are supported by the petition, errors occurring at the trial and in the giving and refusal of instructions are without prejudice.
2. **Pleading: ADMISSIONS.** If a defendant admits by answer or demurrer that he entered into a contract with plaintiffs by an associate name in which the suit is brought, such admission, without further explanation, is equivalent to an admission that the plaintiffs have sufficient capacity to bind and to be bound by the instrument, and to enforce the same in the contract name.

ERROR to the district court for Frontier county: ROBERT C. ORR, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

J. H. Lincoln and E. B. Perry, for plaintiff in error.

J. A. Williams and J. L. White, contra.

AMES, C.

The petition alleges the execution and delivery by the defendants of two written guaranties to the effect that they would be bound to the plaintiffs to the extent of \$342.49 for the payment of the purchase price of goods thereafter to be sold upon credit by the latter to one J. W. Moore, and that in consideration of and reliance upon said guaranties the plaintiffs had sold and delivered to said Moore goods upon credit to an amount exceeding said sum, for which payment had not been made, and for which judgment was prayed. The answer of defendant Miller "admits the execution of the guaranties herein sued upon; admits the selling of the goods mentioned in the

petition to J. W. Moore, and that said Moore paid thereon the sum of \$101.24 (the amount of partial payment in excess of the amount sued for, alleged in the petition), and denies each and every other allegation contained in the petition not hereinafter admitted." The answer then alleges that at the time said guaranties were executed the defendants, or at least Miller, had some understandings and agreements with Moore respecting the purpose and effect of the instruments, and the extent and conditions of the liabilities of the guarantors, not expressed or implied by the language of the papers themselves, but it is not alleged that the plaintiffs were present or represented in person or by agent at the time the conversation or conversations were had, or knew of them until after the sale and delivery of the goods. It is further alleged that the plaintiffs were negligent in selling Moore upon credit goods to the amount of \$447, or \$105 in excess of the sum guaranteed, thus contributing to his insolvency—but it is not alleged that he is in fact insolvent—and in neglecting and refusing to prosecute actions for the recovery of the amount from their principal. There was a reply and a trial, and a verdict and judgment for the plaintiff, from which defendant Miller prosecutes error.

Several errors are assigned for rulings admitting and excluding evidence, and for instructions given and refused, and because of alleged insufficiency of the evidence to support the verdict, but we think it quite clear that the answer not only fails to state a defense, but admits the plaintiffs' cause of action, and such errors, if any, were therefore without prejudice.

It is also objected that it is not alleged that the plaintiffs are a partnership doing business in this state, or a corporation either domestic or foreign, or for any such reason authorized to sue in their associate name. There was a demurrer on the ground that the plaintiffs have not legal capacity to sue, but it was overruled, and we think properly so, because it was disclosed on the face of the petition, and admitted by a general demurrer, and after-

Morrison v. Hunter.

wards by the answer, that the defendant had entered into the contracts with the plaintiffs by that name, which we think is equivalent, without further explanation, to an admission that the plaintiffs have sufficient capacity to bind and to be bound by the instruments, and to enforce the same in the contract name. If there are any facts or circumstances rebutting such presumption they should have been pleaded by the answer, and are now to be treated as waived.

For these reasons, we recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

LETTON and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

AFFIRMED.

JAMES S. MORRISON, APPELLANT, v. JAMES HUNTER ET AL.,
APPELLEES.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 13,932.

1. **Principal and Agent: GOOD FAITH.** One occupying confidential relations toward another is held to the exercise of scrupulous good faith, and will not be permitted to make use of knowledge or opportunities to his own advantage and the injury of the party with whom he is dealing, from which the latter is in good conscience entitled to profit.
2. **Evidence examined, and held** to entitle the plaintiff to the relief prayed in his petition.

APPEAL from the district court for Harlan county: ED L. ADAMS, JUDGE. *Reversed with directions.*

R. L. Keester, J. G. Thompson and Flansburg & Williams, for appellant.

F. B. Beall, John Everson and Stewart & Munger, contra,

AMES, C.

D. S. Gray, a nonresident, was the owner of a quarter section of land in Harlan county, in this state, which was in the possession of a tenant named Smith. Gray wrote to James Hunter, who lived at Republican City, near the land, a letter authorizing the latter to sell or lease the land to Leannah Berry and Lee L. Berry for a term of years. The Berrys were in possession under Smith, and pursuant to this authority Hunter executed and delivered to them a lease containing the following covenants: "It is further expressly agreed between the parties hereto that the parties of the second part are to have the refusal of buying said premises, if any other party wants to buy them. It is further agreed by the parties of the second part that they will not sublet or in any manner release without the written consent of the party of the first part." Rent was reserved, payable annually, with a provision for forfeiture of the residue of the term for nonpayment when due. Appellant Morrison owned an adjoining tract of land and was desirous of purchasing the premises in question. With that end in view he had several conversations with the Berrys and with Hunter, and the latter assured him that, by purchasing and taking an assignment of the lease and the residue of the term from the former, he would succeed to their option of purchase contained in the covenant first above quoted. After some negotiation and in reliance upon these assurances Morrison did make the purchase, paying the Berrys \$200 for improvements they had put upon the premises and \$175 for the unexpired portion of the term, and taking a written assignment of the lease, which was indorsed in the instrument by Hunter, and went into possession. During the progress of these negotiations, and afterwards, Morrison was also in negotiation with Hunter and with Gray for the purchase of the title to the premises. Gray also offered to sell the land to Hunter for \$1,200, but Hunter, instead of com-

municating that fact to Morrison, told the latter that the lowest price for which it could be bought was \$1,500. Morrison opened correspondence with Gray through an agent named Buchanan, to whom Gray also offered to make sale for \$1,200. This last offer Morrison communicated to Hunter, who denied that the land could be purchased for that price, but on the same day he accepted by telegram the offer by Gray to sell to himself for \$1,200, and within a few days and in due course of the mails forwarded the purchase price and received a deed, which he put upon the records of the county. Shortly afterwards Hunter conveyed the "east eighty" of the land by a quit-claim deed to A. B. Heath, and the latter conveyance was made of record also.

There is a considerable mass of evidence which is somewhat conflicting as to minor details, but the foregoing are the ultimate facts disclosed by the record, with little or no substantial conflict. This action was brought by Morrison against Hunter, Heath and Gray to compel a conveyance of the land to him upon payment of the sum of \$1,200. Gray was not served with summons and is not a necessary party. Heath filed an answer, alleging that prior to the purchase of the lease by Morrison it was agreed between the two that they would buy the lease and improvements at equal expense and then divide the occupancy of the land between them, he taking the east eighty and Morrison the other, and that he paid his share of the purchase price to Morrison, who obtained the assignment of the lease to himself in violation of the agreement; but it does not appear that he suffered any injury by that fact, because he says that he entered into possession and has remained in possession of the east eighty under the assignment until the present time, and that repeatedly before the purchase of the land by Hunter he (Heath) requested Morrison to unite with him in the purchase of the quarter section on joint account, which the latter refused to do. He further alleged that he purposely refused or neglected to contribute his share of an instalment of rent falling due

Morrison v. Hunter.

on March 1, 1902, and that by reason of such failure that instalment was not paid and the term was forfeited, and that the purchase from Gray and his own purchase from Hunter were made after the occurrence of the forfeiture, and that both of them were, or at any rate the latter was, in good faith. But the conveyance by Hunter to Heath was a quitclaim deed, and the answer merely alleges that the latter paid "a valuable consideration" therefor, which is denied by the reply, and our attention has not been called to any evidence on the subject, so that we think that Heath must be treated as standing in the shoes of Hunter. Moreover, his testimony concerning other features of the transaction is denied by Morrison and but illy harmonizes with admitted facts.

Hunter relies mainly, if not solely, upon the above quoted covenants against subletting and releasing and the alleged forfeiture for nonpayment of rent, but we doubt very much if there was a substantial breach of the former, and no attempt was made to enforce the forfeiture, and we are satisfied that in no event, under the circumstances disclosed by the record, is Hunter in a position to avail himself of either breach or forfeiture to the injury of the plaintiff for his own benefit. He occupied a somewhat inconsistent attitude with Morrison, on the one side, and Gray, on the other, which put him in confidential relations with both and required of him the exercise of the most scrupulous good faith toward both. He knew that Gray was willing to sell the land for \$1,200, but concealed that fact from the plaintiff, whom he knew to be relying upon his assistance in making the purchase, until he learned that the latter had ascertained the price from another source, and then speedily availed himself of an opportunity to procure the title for the same sum for himself, so as to deprive the plaintiff of his opportunity. This, we think, he ought not to be permitted to do. In thus deciding we place no stress upon the clause in the lease giving the lessee the "refusal of buying," but base our decision entirely upon the confidential relations between the parties. The district

Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Mitchell.

court dismissed the action. We recommend that the judgment be reversed and the cause remanded, with instructions to render a decree for the plaintiff, pursuant to the prayer of the petition, upon his paying to the parties entitled thereto the purchase price of \$1,200, with interest.

LETTON and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded, with instructions to render a decree for the plaintiff, pursuant to the prayer of the petition, upon his paying to the parties entitled thereto the purchase price of \$1,200, with interest.

REVERSED.

CHICAGO, BURLINGTON & QUINCY RAILROAD COMPANY V.
RICHARD MITCHELL ET AL.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 13,874.

1. Petition examined, and *held* to definitely state a good cause of action.
2. Evidence examined, and *held* sufficient to support the judgment of the trial court.
3. Limitation of Actions: EMBANKMENTS: WATERS. Where an injury to the crops and lands of one is caused by the negligent construction of a railroad embankment, which arrested and held upon said lands the flood waters of a natural stream, such party's cause of action accrues at the date of the injury, and not at the date of the negligent construction of the improvement. *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Emmert*, 53 Neb. 237, followed and approved.
4. Instructions examined and approved.
5. Harmless Error. Action of the trial court in admission of evidence examined, and *held* not prejudicial.

ERROR to the district court for Richardson county:
JOHN S. STULL, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

Francis Martin, J. W. Deucese and Frank E. Bishop,
for plaintiff in error.

E. Falloon and A. J. Weaver, contra.

OLDHAM, C.

This was an action for damages for injuries to growing crops on about 60 acres of land owned by the plaintiffs out of the E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the N. W. $\frac{1}{4}$ and the W. $\frac{1}{4}$ of the N. E. $\frac{1}{4}$ of section 11, township 2, range 13 east, in Richardson county, Nebraska, which damages were alleged to have been occasioned by the negligent construction of a ditch along defendant's right of way, which diverted the waters from their natural channel in the Nemaha river, and discharged the same upon plaintiffs' land to the injury of the growing crops thereon, in the years, 1893, 1895 and 1896. Defendant's line of railroad runs through the above mentioned section from a point a short distance south of the northwest corner of the section, in a southeasterly direction, and traverses a small portion of the southwest corner of plaintiffs' land. Near the point of entrance of the railroad upon section 11, it crosses the Nemaha river, which, at the point of intersection, flows eastward in a meandering channel to a point near the eastern boundary of plaintiffs' land. From this point it meanders in a southwesterly direction through plaintiffs' land and crosses the line of the defendant's right of way eight or ten rods south of the plaintiffs' land. Accordingly, this land and a portion of other lands are inclosed in an irregular triangle by defendant's right of way and the bend of the river. When the defendant's railroad was constructed in the year 1872, a ditch or borrow-pit was dug on the east side of the right of way from the bank of the Nemaha river along the right of way for a distance of about 200 feet. This ditch, according to the testimony offered by the plaintiffs, was about 4 feet deep and 15 feet wide at the mar-

gin of the river, and was excavated for the purpose of procuring dirt for filling the railroad track, and not for purposes of drainage. The petition alleges that this ditch diverted the waters of the Nemaha river from their natural course, and discharged them on the portion of plaintiffs' lands lying immediately east of defendant's right of way, to the injury of their crops in the years above mentioned. Defendant's answer was, in substance, a general denial, and on issues thus joined there was a trial to a jury, a verdict for the plaintiffs for \$200, and judgment on the verdict. To reverse this judgment defendant brings error to this court.

The first question called to our attention in the brief of the railroad company is that the court erred in overruling a motion to require plaintiffs to make their amended petition more definite and certain, in stating wherein the defendant had negligently constructed its roadbed. We think this motion without merit. The petition alleged that the defendant in construction of its roadbed dug a ditch 4 feet deep and 15 feet wide into the bank of the Nemaha river, excavated it back along its right of way in such a manner as to divert the waters which would naturally flow, if unimpeded, in the channel of the river into the ditch, and by this means discharged these waters onto plaintiffs' land. There is no complaint in the petition that defendant failed to make a good and substantial roadbed, but that in doing so it diverted the waters of the Nemaha river from their natural flow to the plaintiffs' damage.

The next question urged is that the evidence is not sufficient to sustain the judgment. A review of the testimony offered by the plaintiffs shows that numerous witnesses sworn in their behalf testify that they saw the water flowing down from the river through defendant's ditch, and flowing from the mouth of the ditch to and over the submerged land of the plaintiffs in the years in which the injury is alleged to have been received. There was evidence, however, that in times of high water the river

would overflow at points surrounding plaintiffs' land below the point of the diversion by defendant's ditch, but the evidence offered by plaintiffs was confined to the years in which there was not a general overflow of the river. Defendant offered the testimony of an experienced civil engineer who made a thorough survey of the ditch or borrow-pit and the banks of the river which meandered plaintiffs' land in the year 1900. From this survey it appeared that the ditch at the bank of the river was several inches higher than the lowest point in the river bank below the ditch and adjacent to plaintiffs' land. From this testimony, which was undisputed, it is urged that the ditch could not have been the proximate cause of the injury to the crops. There would be much weight in this contention, had the survey been made at the time of the injury complained of; but the evidence shows, on the plaintiffs' part, that the ditch had been filled at least two feet after the injury and before the survey was made. Consequently, the question as to whether the injury was occasioned by the ditch or by the natural overflow of the river was one of fact for the determination of the jury.

It is next urged that, because the testimony shows that the borrow-pit or ditch complained of was constructed more than ten years before the injury complained of, the action was barred by the statute of limitations. In support of this contention we are cited to the decision of this court in *Gartner v. Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co.*, 71 Neb. 444. In that case the second cause of action reviewed in the opinion was for injuries to land alleged to have resulted from the negligent construction of defendant's roadbed, whereby surface water was thrown back and over the lands. As a defense to this cause of action, the company pleaded a judgment rendered in favor of the former owner of the premises and against it on a similar cause of action. It was held that the former judgment was for damages to the land, both present and prospective, by reason of the construction of the roadbed, and was binding on the then plaintiff and his privies, the subsequent purchasers

of the land. In the case at bar, no former judgment was pleaded or proved and the damages alleged were for injuries to the growing crops—not to the land—for the years named in the petition. So that this case does not fall within the reason of the rule announced in *Gartner v. Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co.*, *supra*. It is rather governed by the doctrine announced in *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Emmert*, 53 Neb. 237, in which the court said:

“Where an injury to the crops and lands of one is caused by the negligent construction of a railway embankment, which arrested and held upon said lands the flood waters of a natural stream, such party’s cause of action accrues at the date of the injury and not at the date of the negligent construction of the improvement.” *Fremont, E. & M. V. R. Co. v. Harlin*, 50 Neb. 698.

Objection is urged against the action of the trial court in giving and refusing instructions. The instructions, as a whole, clearly submitted to the jury the question to be determined, that is, whether or not the water of the Nemaha river was diverted from its natural channel by defendant’s ditch, and discharged upon plaintiff’s land, by reason of such diversion, when, but for such ditch, the water would have remained in its natural channel. On an affirmative determination of this question from a preponderance of the evidence plaintiffs’ right to recover was predicated. The court gave every instruction requested by defendant except a peremptory one directing a verdict. The instructions given at defendant’s request presented every defense offered as favorable to defendant’s contention as the law would permit. There is no material conflict in the instructions given at the request of the plaintiffs and those given at the request of the defendant. We therefore conclude that the cause was fairly submitted and fully covered by the instructions given.

Complaint is urged against the action of the trial court in the admission of evidence on the measure of damages to the plaintiffs. These objections are technical and specious, and are urged against the court allowing wit-

nesses to testify as to the productive powers and the character of the soil on the land alleged to have been overflowed. The proposition to be established was: What was the value of the growing crops before and after the overflow? This is a question that is always difficult to accurately determine, as the value of growing crops depends on the probability of their subsequent maturity. It was well said in the case of *Wallace v. Goodall*, 18 N. H. 439:

"The value of young timber, like the value of a growing crop, may be but little when separated from the soil. The land stripped of its trees may be valueless. The trees considered as timber may, from their youth, be valueless, and so the injury done to the plaintiff by the trespass would be but imperfectly compensated, unless he could receive a sum that would be equal to their value to him while standing upon the soil."

The court in his instructions fixed the measure of damages as "the difference in the fair market value of the crop just before the land was flooded, in the manner above alleged, if proved, and immediately thereafter." This was the proper measure, and an examination of the whole record shows that the jury in their award administered only a homeopathic dose of damages in the treatment of the plaintiffs' injuries. We are therefore convinced that defendant was not prejudiced in the admission of evidence on this branch of the case.

Finding no reversible error in the record, we recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and LETTON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the above opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

MARIA BRANDON, APPELLEE, V. JENS JENSEN, APPELLANT.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 13,900.

1. **Administrator's Sale.** The provisions of section 117, chapter 23, Compiled Statutes 1903, apply to irregular administrative sales, but not to sales that are absolutely void.
2. **Case Distinguished.** *Seward v. Didier*, 16 Neb. 58, examined and distinguished.
3. **Administrator's Sale: HOMESTEAD.** A homestead of less value than \$2,000 cannot be disposed of at administrator's sale, either for the discharge of incumbrances thereon or for the payment of debts against the estate of the decedent, and a license granted by the district court purporting to authorize such a sale is absolutely void. *Tindall v. Peterson*, 71 Neb. 160, followed and approved.

APPEAL from the district court for Kearney county: ED L. ADAMS, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

J. L. McPheely, for appellant.

John C. Stevens, contra.

OLDHAM, C.

The dispute involved in this action is of law and not of fact. The undisputed facts are: That on the 10th day of November, 1896, Warren Whitesel departed this life seized of 80 acres of land situated in Kearney county, Nebraska, of less value than \$2,000, which he had occupied with his wife as a homestead for several years preceding his death. These lands were subject to a mortgage of \$500 and interest. The deceased was the illegitimate son of Maria Brandon, the plaintiff in this cause of action, and died intestate, leaving a widow, Percilla Whitesel, but no children. The wife procured letters of administration on the estate, and claims of a general nature were allowed against the estate in the sum of about \$700. On October 5, 1897, the administratrix applied to the district court for a license to sell the real property of the deceased to pay the indebtedness of the estate. The license was

Brandon v. Jensen.

granted, and the lands were sold on December 4, 1897, at public sale, and purchased by the mortgagee, Jens Jensen, who is the defendant in this suit. The sale was confirmed on the 7th day of December, 1897. On March 1, 1900, Percilla Whitesel departed this life, and on the 7th day of August, 1903, the plaintiff, Maria Brandon, the sole heir at law of Warren Whitesel, instituted this cause of action against the defendant to quiet her title to the premises owned by her son at his death, and to remove the cloud cast thereon by the administrator's sale and the deed issued pursuant thereto. Defendant, for answer, denied plaintiff's right to bring the action, and alleged that he was the owner of the premises under the purchase at the administrator's sale, and that the plaintiff was barred by the statute of limitations from maintaining the action, because more than five years had elapsed between the confirmation of the sale and the institution of the suit. On issues thus joined the court found in favor of the plaintiff, and entered a decree quieting her title to the premises in dispute. An accounting was taken of the amount due the defendant on the note and mortgage, and defendant was charged with the value of the rents and profits on the premises from the time of the death of Percilla Whitesel, and it was found that there was due the defendant on his mortgage the sum of \$168, which was declared a first lien on the premises. There is no complaint as to the amounts found, if it is determined that the plaintiff had a right to recover.

The right of the mother to inherit the property of her illegitimate child, as fixed by our statute, is conceded. It is also recognized that, under our statute, the homestead selected from the husband's lands descends to *his* heirs after the death of his widow. So the only question to determine is whether or not plaintiff's action in the instant suit is barred by section 117, chapter 23, Compiled Statutes 1903 (Ann. St. 4982), which provides as follows: "No action for the recovery of any estate sold by an executor or administrator, under the provisions of this sub-

division, shall be maintained by any heir or other person claiming under the deceased testator or intestate, unless it be commenced within five years next after the sale." It is contended by counsel for appellant that this section of the statute is an absolute bar against any action to set aside such sale, whether void or voidable. On the other hand, it is contended by counsel for the appellee that this section is only intended to aid irregular and voidable sales and can have no effect on a sale made by one having no authority or semblance thereof. The identical question, under a similar statute, has been twice before the supreme court of the state of Iowa for determination. It was first considered in the case of *Good v. Norley*, 28 Ia. 188, and the court at that time was divided in its opinion on the question. Beck, J., delivered a very able and exhaustive opinion holding that the statute could have no application to a sale that was absolutely void. Cole, J., concurred in this view. Dillon, C. J., was of the opinion that the statute applied to all sales. Wright, J., was of the opinion that, under the facts of the case considered, the sale sought to be set aside was not void. On this division of the court, a judgment of the lower court holding the action barred was sustained; but when the same question was considered by that court in the later case of *Boyles v. Boyles*, 37 Ia. 592, the court unanimously sustained the opinion of Justice Beck and held that the statute applied to irregular and voidable sales alone. This latter decision is supported by the holdings in *Staples v. Connor*, 79 Cal. 14, and *Chadbourne v. Rackliff*, 30 Me. 354, and has received the approval of such standard text writers as Freeman and Black. This question was discussed in this court by MAXWELL, J., in *Seward v. Didier*, 16 Neb. 64, and the language used would indicate that the writer of the opinion was favorably impressed with the language of Chief Justice Dillon in *Good v. Norley*, *supra*. The case under discussion, however, only presented questions involved in an irregular, rather than a void, sale, and as applicable to the case decided by this court, the quotation from the

Brandon v. Jensen.

opinion of Chief Justice Dillon was well chosen. But we think the suggestion that the statute "would be robbed of its virtue if it were confined to cases where the sale was valid, for such sales do not need the protection of the statute," was aptly met in the *contra* opinion by Beck, J., when he said:

"It is also said that 'it is the infirm and defective title, the one that could otherwise not stand the test of an action by the heir to recover, which was intended to be cured' by the statute. To this proposition I assent, and I have just pointed out that this kind of titles the statute is designed to aid. An 'infirm and defective title' is a very different thing, as we have just seen, from a void title. The first is a *title*, the second is *no title* at all. The first may grow into a perfect title, for it has the germ of life in it; the second can never become a title, for it wants the life, the essential element of a title."

The next question to consider is: Was the attempted sale of the homestead by the administratrix of the estate void, or merely a voidable proceeding? Freeman, *Void Judicial Sales* (4th ed.), sec. 35, says: "If, under the statute of a state, the homestead of a decedent does not come within the control of its probate courts, an administrator's sale thereof, though ordered and confirmed by the court, is an idle proceeding." Citing *Yarboro v. Brewster*, 38 Tex. 397; *Howe v. McGivern*, 25 Wis. 525; *Wehrle v. Wehrle*, 39 Ohio St. 365. The question of the right of an administrator to sell a homestead for the payment of the debts of his decedent in this state was determined in a very able opinion by my brother AMES, in the recent case of *Tindall v. Peterson*, 71 Neb. 160, wherein it was held, after a careful review of all the authorities:

"A homestead of less value than \$2,000 cannot be disposed of at administrator's sale either for the discharge of incumbrances thereon, or for the payment of debts against the estate of the decedent, and a license granted by the district court, purporting to authorize such a sale, is absolutely void."

Kinkead v. Turgeon.

We are therefore of opinion that the sale of the homestead in the instant case was a void, and not a voidable, sale, and that the learned trial court was fully justified in holding that the action by the heir to recover the land was not barred by section 117, *supra*. We therefore recommend that the decree of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and LETTON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion, the decree of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

WILLIAM KINKEAD v. C. W. TURGEON ET AL.*

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 13,904.

1. **Navigable Waters: RIPARIAN PROPRIETORS.** The title to the bed of a navigable river in Nebraska is in the state, and the rights of a riparian proprietor on such stream are bounded by the banks of the river.
2. **Case of *Bouvier v. Stricklett*, 40 Neb. 792, criticised.**

ERROR to the district court for Dakota county: GUY T. GRAVES, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

John T. Spencer and R. E. Evans, for plaintiff in error.

J. J. McAllister, Edwin J. Stason and J. C. McConkey, *contra*.

OLDHAM, C.

This was a suit in ejectment, which was tried to the court and a jury on the following stipulation of facts: "It is hereby stipulated by and between the parties hereto: That the plaintiff is, and in 1876 was, the owner of so much of the land described in his petition as was above the line of ordinary high water mark of the Missouri river in May, 1876; that in May, 1876, the Missouri river, which

* Rehearing allowed. See opinion, p. 580, *post*.

Kinkad v. Turgeon.

is a navigable state boundary river, suddenly abandoned its permanent channel adjacent to plaintiff's said land, leaving its former channel and forming a new channel by suddenly cutting through a neck of land to the south of plaintiff's said land; that all the land in controversy in this action, and occupied by the defendants C. W. Turgeon, V. C. Turgeon, N. Turgeon, Charles Bray, and Caleb Marsh at the time this action was commenced and at the present time, is wholly below and outside of the ordinary high water mark of the Missouri river, as it flowed at the time of said sudden change, and cut off the permanent bed of said river, and is now the dry, abandoned bed of the said river; that the lands occupied by the defendants at the commencement of this action and at the present time constitute the abandoned river bed of the Missouri river as said river flowed prior to the cut-off in 1876, being that part of said bed between the center of the channel where said river then ran and the high bank of the land owned and occupied by the plaintiff on the Nebraska side, and described in plaintiff's petition." The court directed a verdict for the defendants. There was judgment on the verdict, and to set aside this judgment plaintiff brings error to this court.

The stipulation of facts in this case is exceedingly meager, and the most that can be gathered from it is that in and since 1876 the plaintiff was the owner of riparian lands on the Missouri river, a navigable stream; that, by a sudden change of channel, the waters receded from plaintiff's land and left an abandoned river bottom between the former high water mark of the river and the middle of its former channel, which is now occupied by the defendants. Plaintiff's claim to the land rests solely on the doctrine that the riparian owners of lands bordering on the Missouri river take to the middle thread of the stream, notwithstanding the fact of its navigability. Had the addition to these lands formed by gradual accretion or reliction, a different question would have been presented, since even the riparian owners on tide-water rivers at common law

took the alluvium formed by slow and imperceptible accretion. But under the stipulation the lands in question were admitted to have been formed by a sudden change of the channel of the river. Consequently, plaintiff's claim to the bed of the river turns on his right as a riparian owner to take to the middle thread of a navigable river that bounds his land. At common law the title to the bed of navigable tide-water rivers is in the king, who holds it in trust for his subjects. In the states of the American Union in which the English common law prevails there is a conflict of opinions in the courts of last resort as to whether the title to the beds of fresh-water rivers, which are navigable in fact, remains in the state or is in the riparian owners of the stream. This conflict arose when some of the colonial courts, and later the supreme court of the United States, made a departure from the common law test of navigability (that it should be a stream in which the tide ebbs and flows, or an "arm of the sea"), and made the test a practical question of fact as to whether or not the stream was actually navigated. When this departure was made, the conflict arose in the different states as to what rule should be applied to the ownership of the beds of streams which were navigable in fact, but not at common law.

As has been stated, at common law the bed of a river in which the tide ebbed and flowed was held by the king, while the title to the bed of all fresh-water rivers was in the riparian owners. Some of the American courts, notably Illinois, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland and Maine, applied the doctrine that, as these fresh-water streams were nonnavigable at common law, the common law rule as to the title to fresh-water streams should apply, and, consequently, that each riparian owner took to the middle thread of the stream. *Adams v. Pease*, 2 Conn. 481; *Braxton v. Bressler*, 64 Ill. 488; *Delaney v. Boston*, 2 Harr. (Del.) 489; *Hendrick v. Cook*, 4 Ga. 241. The opposite view found favor in the decisions of the supreme courts of Pennsylvania, Iowa, Missouri,

Kinkaid v. Turgeon.

Kansas, Minnesota, California, Nevada, Arkansas, Alabama, Tennessee, Indiana and others. *McManus v. Carmichael*, 3 Ia. 1; *Carson v. Blazer*, 2 Binn. (Pa.) 475; *Wood v. Fowler*, 26 Kan. 682; *Lamme v. Buse*, 70 Mo. 463; *Schurmeier v. St. Paul & P. R. Co.*, 10 Minn. 59, affirmed in supreme court of the United States, 7 Wall. (U. S.) 272; *Packer v. Bird*, 71 Cal. 134; *Shoemaker v. Hatch*, 13 Nev. 261; *Bullock v. Wilson*, 2 Port. (Ala.) 436; *St. Louis, I. M. & S. R. Co. v. Ramsey*, 53 Ark. 314, 13 S. W. 931, 8 L. R. A. 559; *Elder v. Burrus*, 6 Humph. (Tenn.) 358; *Bainbridge v. Sherlock*, 29 Ind. 364. This line of decisions proceeds on the theory that, as these streams, although not "arms of the sea," have been determined to be in fact navigable, the rule applicable to the bed of navigable tide-water streams at common law should govern them, and that, as the beds of navigable streams were reserved by the states when the constitution of the United States was adopted, the title to the beds of those rivers is in the states. The supreme court of the United States has held, in *Barney v. Keokuk*, 94 U. S. 324, and *Packer v. Bird*, 137 U. S. 661, that it is for the states to determine the question of the title to the beds of these rivers as between itself and the riparian proprietors.

It is plain that we stand at the parting of the ways in regard to the decisions of the state courts of this country on the question of title to river beds of the class in dispute. It is also apparent that each of these two divergent lines of authority start from a basis both sound and sane, and that the results of each of these lines of decisions have been sanctioned and approved by the supreme court of the United States. It then devolves upon us to examine carefully the decisions of our own court, and determine from them, if possible, which of the diverging paths we shall follow. The first decision of this court called to our attention is the case of *Lammers v. Nissen*, 4 Neb. 245. This was a dispute over lands on the banks of the Missouri river claimed as accretions by alluvial deposits. The case, however, was determined on the evidence, which tended to

show that the lands had not been formed as alluvium after the survey by the general government. The case also involved a question of meandered lines, not in point in the instant case. The next case cited is *Bissel v. Fletcher*, 19 Neb. 725. This was a controversy over riparian rights on a nonnavigable stream, and turned on a question of fact as to whether or not the lands claimed were formed by accretion. The question of riparian rights was next brought before this court in *Wiggenhorn v. Kountz*, 23 Neb. 690. There the dispute arose over the cutting of timber from an island in the Platte river. While the case was carefully considered and the authorities reviewed by the court, yet the question as to the title to the bed of a navigable river was not in issue and in no way adverted to. Consequently, this case is of little assistance in reaching a conclusion. In *Gill v. Lydick*, 40 Neb. 508, again the question was as to the right to accretions on the Missouri river, where the "river recedes slowly and imperceptibly, changing the channel of the stream and leaving the land dry theretofore covered by water." It was held that the alluvium so formed belonged to the riparian owner, but that, if the alteration takes places suddenly, the ownership would remain according to the former bounds. This case, while not in point, excludes any claim to the land by plaintiff in this cause of action on the doctrine of accretion. The next case, *Bourier v. Stricklett*, 40 Neb. 792, was a dispute over an island in the Missouri river, claimed by the riparian owner as an accretion to his land. A judgment entered in the court below in favor of the defendant was affirmed by this court. In reaching the conclusion, many authorities are quoted in the opinion relative to the character of testimony necessary to establish the formation of land by accretion. For this purpose the decision of the supreme court of the United States in *County of St. Clair v. Lovington*, 23 Wall. (U. S.) 46, is quoted from, because it discusses with great learning the peculiar character of the Missouri river with reference to changes in its channel. The result reached by the opinion was that the

evidence in the case then considered was not sufficient to show that the island had been formed by accretion. But, plainly by some oversight, it is said in the first lines of the fourth paragraph of the syllabus: "Where the middle of the channel of a stream of water constitutes the boundary line of a tract of land." While the syllabus, as a whole, properly states the law, yet so much of it as seems to hold that the title to lands on the banks of the Missouri river extends to the middle of the stream is purely *obiter dictum*, and unfounded on any question necessarily decided in the opinion. In *Clark v. Cambridge & A. I. & I. Co.*, 45 Neb. 798, a contest between a mill owner and an irrigation company over the waters of the Republican river, Post, J., speaking for the court, clearly indicated his adherence to the doctrine that the title to the beds of navigable rivers is in the state and not the riparian owners. But this question was not adjudicated, because it was held that the Republican river was a nonnavigable stream in fact, as well as at common law. In *Cracford Co. v. Hathaway*, 60 Neb. 754, 61 Neb. 317, 67 Neb. 325, again the contest was between a mill owner and an irrigation company over the use of the waters of a nonnavigable stream. The opinion in this case gives a very thorough and lucid discussion of the law of running waters and, while the bed of a navigable stream was not in issue, the author clearly expressed his views on this question. Citing many authorities for his position, he said:

"While this subject received slight attention in the case of *Clark v. Cambridge & Arapahoe Irrigation & Improvement Co.*, 45 Neb. 798, it was not determined, as a decision of the case turned on another point. As to navigable streams, the doctrine seems to be that the water and the soil thereunder belong to the state, and are under its sovereignty and domain, in trust for the people, and cannot, therefore, be the subject of a claim of property therein, or the right to the use thereof by an adjoining landowner. When the government, in its survey, runs meander lines along the banks of a stream and parts with its title to the

adjoining land, the boundary of which would be the high-water mark, then it would seem permissible to classify the stream as navigable, in which case the waters thereof and the bed thereunder would belong to the state, and be held by it in trust for the people. The waters in such streams would be held to be *publici juris*, and not subject to riparian claims by the adjoining landowner." *Crawford Co. v. Hathaway*, 67 Neb. 325, 350.

In *McBride v. Whitaker*, 65 Neb. 137, the controversy was over an island in the Platte river. The learned commissioner who wrote the opinion in the case specifically called attention to the fact that he was only determining the rights of the litigants in that case, from which no impression should go out that any claims of the state to the bed of the Platte river, or any unsurveyed island therein, were to be affected.

While it is probably true, as contended by counsel for plaintiff in error before us, that there has never been a final adjudication by this court of the rights of a riparian owner to take to the middle thread of the stream of the Missouri river, yet we think that the language used in rendering the opinions in *Clark v. Cambridge & A. I. & I. Co.*, *supra*, and *Crawford Co. v. Hathaway*, *supra*, leaves little reason to doubt that Nebraska should be added to the list of states which hold that the title to the beds of fresh-water rivers, which are navigable in fact, is in the state, and that the right of the riparian owner is bounded by the banks of the stream.

We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and LETTON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

The following opinion on rehearing was filed November 10, 1906. *Reversed*:

1. **Common Law.** By statute so much of the common law of England as is applicable and not inconsistent with the constitution of the United States or the constitution and statutes of this state is in force in this state.
2. ———: **RIPARIAN RIGHTS.** Under the common law a riparian owner of lands on one side of a navigable river above the flow of the tide holds to the thread of the stream, subject to the public easement of navigation, and, if the river suddenly changes its channel and leaves its former bed, the boundary does not change, and he still holds to the same line. This is also the rule of the civil law.
3. ———: ———. The common law relating to the rights of such riparian owners is applicable in this state, and is not inconsistent with the constitution or statutes of Nebraska or the constitution of the United States.
4. ———: ———. Where the Missouri river suddenly changes its course and abandons its former bed, the respective riparian owners are entitled to the possession and ownership of the soil formerly under its waters as far as the thread of the stream, and may maintain ejectment to oust squatters within such limits.
5. Former opinion, *ante*, p. 573, vacated.

LEITON, J.

The facts in this case are set forth in a former opinion by OLDHAM, C., reported *ante*, p. 573. On account of the fact that at the former hearing the commission was not favored with an oral argument of the case, and, further, for the reason that the question involved is of great public importance, a rehearing was allowed, and the case is again presented for consideration. As was pointed out in the former opinion, the question presented is here for the first time, though cases involving the rights of riparian owners to lands formed by accretion as alluvium have heretofore been considered by the court, and in deciding some of these cases certain expressions of opinion have been incidentally made by the writers of the several opin-

ions upon the question here presented. In none of them, however, was the determination of this question necessary to the disposition of the case, nor was any argument made or authorities presented upon the point. In *Clark v. Cambridge & A. I. & I. Co.*, 45 Neb. 798, the writer of the opinion indicates his personal views upon this question, but, since the case expressly holds that the Republican river is not a navigable stream, the expression was purely *obiter*. In *Crawford Co. v. Hathaway*, 67 Neb. 325, opinion by HOLCOMB, J., the writer of the opinion says:

"Whether the common law rule fixing the rights of riparian proprietors applies to the larger streams of the state, such as may be classed as interstate rivers, and along the banks of which meander lines have been run by the government in its survey of the public lands, presents an entirely different question, and it would seem that riparian rights would not attach to the waters of such rivers. A final determination of the question, however, is not here made, as this should be left to be decided in a proper case, where the subject is fairly presented and considered after opportunity for thorough investigation, aided by the researches and arguments of counsel."

It will be seen therefore that we approach the question unhampered by any previous adjudication.

There is an irreconcilable conflict between the decisions of the courts of different states of this country upon this question. From a somewhat extended examination of the various opinions, the writer believes that much of the confusion has resulted, partly from a mistaken idea as to what the supreme court of the United States had decided upon the question, partly from an idea that meander lines in maps of original surveys limited and bounded the estate of the riparian owner by the bank of the stream, and partly from a mistaken idea of the necessities of the case, based upon the differences in length, volume and navigability of the great rivers of America above tide water as compared with the inconsiderable extent of those English rivers which are navigable both above and below

the flow of the tide. See *Mayor and Aldermen of the City of Mobile v. Eslava*, 9 Porter (Ala.), 578; *McManus v. Carmichael*, 3 Ia. 1, 56; *Cooley v. Golden*, 117 Mo. 33.

The statute of this state provides: "So much of the common law of England as is applicable and not inconsistent with the constitution of the United States, with the organic law of this territory, or with any law passed or to be passed by the legislature of this territory is adopted and declared to be law within said territory." Comp. St. 1903, ch. 15a, sec. 1; Ann. St. 6950. In this connection we have said:

"The power of the courts to declare established doctrines of the common law inapplicable to this state should be used somewhat sparingly, and its exercise is not to be justified unless the inapplicability of a rule is general, extending to the whole or the greater part of the state, or, at least, to an area capable of definite judicial ascertainment. The common law rules as to the rights and duties of riparian owners are in force in every part of the state, except as altered or modified by statutes." *Meng v. Coffee*, 67 Neb. 500; *Slattery v. Harley*, 58 Neb. 575.

The statutory provision above set forth has been in force in the territory and state of Nebraska for over 50 years, and during that period of more than half a century the courts have declared the common law inapplicable in but few instances, and in several of the instances that portion of the common law held inapplicable to our changed conditions has been that part thereof consisting of statutes enacted long before the American revolution. *Meng v. Coffee*, *supra*. The cases in which the applicability of the common law as to the rights of riparian owners has been challenged heretofore in this state have all been concerned with the subject of the rights of the riparian owner to the unimpaired use of the water in the stream in resistance to a right claimed by appropriators to take it for purposes of irrigation or power; and the language used in *Meng v. Coffee*, *supra*, and other cases dealing with the same subject, while declaring as a general rule the su-

premacy of the common law doctrine, is hardly applicable upon the question here presented, for, when deciding that the right of the riparian owner to the use of the running water in a stream was superior to the right of a person seeking to divert the water from the stream for irrigation purposes, it can hardly be said that the court had in mind the question here presented as to the right of a riparian owner to an abandoned river bed of a navigable stream. We think the question, therefore, must be considered open and not settled by the prior decisions. They are worthy of consideration, however, and must be given weight as determining the general policy of this court with reference to the question of the rejection of the common law rule.

The questions, then, necessary for determination in this case are: First, what is the common law of England as to the rights of riparian proprietors in such a case as this; and, second, are the provisions of the common law applicable, and, if applicable, are they in any way inconsistent with the constitution of the United States, with the organic law of this state or with any law passed by the legislature of this state? These being the questions presented, it is obvious that the weight to be attached to the opinions of the courts of other states upon the question of the rights of riparian proprietors in an abandoned river bed depends upon how far the constitution and statutes of such state correspond with those of this state, as well as upon the persuasiveness of the reasoning set forth in the opinions.

Under the common law of England the title to the bed of the sea below high water mark, and to the bed of all rivers as far as the flow of the tide extended, was in the crown, but the title to the bed of all fresh water rivers above the ebb and flow of the tide, whether navigable or nonnavigable, where the river formed the boundary between adjoining proprietors, was in the riparian owner to the thread of the stream. Lord Hale, *De Jure Maris*, Hargrave Law Tracts, 5; *King v. Wharton*, 12 Mod. (Eng.) 510; *Hardin v. Jordan*, 140 U. S. 371, 11 Sup. Ct.

Rep. 808; Farnham, Waters, sec. 48; *Shively v. Bowlby*, 152 U. S. 1. Chancellor Kent says: "The right of sovereignty in public rivers above the flow of the tide is the same as in tide waters; they are *juris publici*, except that the proprietors adjoining such rivers own the soil, *ad flum aquæ*. But grants of land, bounded on rivers, or upon margins of the same, or along the same, above tide water, carry the exclusive right and title of the grantee to the center of the stream, unless the terms of the grant clearly denote the intention to stop at the edge or margin of the river; and the public, in cases where the river is navigable for boats and rafts, have an easement therein, or a right of passage, subject to the *jus publicum* as a public highway. The proprietors of the adjoining banks have a right to use the land and water of the river, as regards the public, in any way not inconsistent with the easement." 3 Kent's Commentaries (13th ed.), p. *427. This also is the rule of the civil law. Waze, Roman Water Law, secs. 22, 94. There appears, then, to be no controversy as to what constitutes the common law of England in regard to fresh waters or navigable rivers above the flow of the tide. Some of the cases in this country fail to draw a distinction between the rule of the common law with reference to rivers which are navigable in fact above the flow of the tide, and those navigable only where the tide flows, and adopted the idea that by the common law no rivers were navigable or considered as navigable in law except those in which the tide rose and fell. Comparing, then, the diminutive size and length and volume of the rivers of England with the magnificent waterways of this country, it was held that the common law as to navigable rivers was inapplicable to the situation in this country, and that our great rivers, which are navigable in fact for hundreds or perhaps thousands of miles, are to be treated in law as were navigable rivers of England, meaning thereby the rivers in which the flow of the tide was perceptible. Much reasoning has been indulged in, based upon the apparent disproportion of the rivers of England

and America, to show the necessity of abrogating the common law rule on account of the actual navigability of our rivers above tide water. However, the rule of the common law has been adopted in Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, partly in New York, and in Ohio, South Carolina and Wisconsin. It is rejected in Pennsylvannia, Virginia, North Carolina, Alabama, Florida, Texas, Tennessee, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Oregon, Nevada and California. In some of the states which reject the rule the rejection is based upon the system of land surveys of the United States, it being held that, where in the original survey the boundary next the stream is meandered, the government has parted with its title only to the extent of the meander line, and has reserved to itself, or to the state which afterwards was created, the title to the bed of the stream. Later decisions of the United States supreme court, however, have settled that the meander line along the bank of a navigable river is not a monument of title or boundary line, but merely marks the place where the water flowed at the time of the survey (*Hardin v. Jordan*, 140 U. S. 371; *Jefferis v. East Omaha Land Co.*, 134 U. S. 178, 10 Sup. Ct. Rep. 518), and the doctrine of that court now is that, by the admission of the several states, whatever right or title the United States had to the bed of such navigable streams passed to the state government, and that the local law of each state determines the question whether the bed of such streams belongs to the state or to the riparian owner. *Barney v. Keokuk*, 94 U. S. 324; *St. Louis v. Myers*, 113 U. S. 566, 5 Sup. Ct. Rep. 640; *Hardin v. Jordan*, *supra*; *St. Anthony Falls Water-Power Co. v. Board of Water Commissioners*, 168 U. S. 349. These decisions of the supreme court of the United States conclusively establish the fact, therefore, that the common law with reference to riparian ownership in navigable streams is not inconsistent with the constitution of the United States nor with the organic law of this state, and, since

no law upon this subject has been passed by the legislature of the territory of Nebraska or of the state of Nebraska, the common law is not inconsistent with the statutory law of the state.

The only remaining question, then, is whether or not the common law rule is applicable to the conditions in this state with reference to the rights of riparian owners upon the Missouri river. As to a portion of such riparian rights this court has already spoken. We have held that the rights of riparian owners upon the Missouri river to land formed by accretion are the same as if the river were not navigable, and that the common law applies in full force. *Gill v. Lydick*, 40 Neb. 508. The same doctrine has been declared by the supreme court of the United States in the case of *Jefferis v. East Omaha Land Co.*, 134 U. S. 178, 10 Sup. Ct. Rep. 518, citing *Jones v. Soulard*, 24 How. (U. S.) 41, and other cases. In passing upon the applicability of the common law to our conditions, in the first place it is well to observe that for upwards of half a century the people of the territory of Nebraska and the state of Nebraska have been in occupancy of the west bank of the Missouri river. The first settlement of the territory was along the Missouri river, and its fertile valley has been the home of thrifty farmers ever since. It is a matter of public knowledge, of which the court will take judicial notice, that that great river in this locality takes its course through a wide valley composed, in the main, of loose, sandy and friable soil of great fertility; that it is subject to annual floods, sometimes of great extent and volume; that its course is erratic and tortuous; that sometimes, during flood periods, its current will strike or impinge upon its banks at such an angle and with such effect as, even in a single day, to undermine the same, and cause large masses of soil to fall into the stream and be disintegrated, and thus whole farms are swallowed up with almost inconceivable rapidity, while in other localities hundreds of acres are often added to its banks by the process of accretion. It is further a matter of common knowledge that at a number of points along the

northern and western boundary of the state the river has, as in this case, cut across the neck of a peninsula, entirely abandoned its old bed, and left the former peninsula, with the abandoned bed, entirely across the river upon the eastern or northern bank, and thus physically dissevered from the state of Nebraska and conjoined to Dakota, Iowa or Missouri. See *Nebraska v. Iowa*, 143 U. S. 359; *Missouri v. Nebraska*, 196 U. S. 23, 25 Sup. Ct. Rep. 155. These processes have been going on for fifty years. During the whole period of time the state of Nebraska has existed it has never asserted any title or dominion over the abandoned river bed, but has left the riparian owner in full possession and control of the same to the thread of the stream, and many fertile farms now occupy the place where the waters once flowed. When the river abandoned the bed the riparian owner occupied it, claiming title thereto, and as fast as it became subject to useful purposes reclaimed it for agriculture. For so long a period, therefore, it has been considered by the authorities of the state of Nebraska that the common law is applicable to the conditions along the Missouri river, and the fact of this administrative construction of the law by the state authorities, extending over so many years, is entitled to great, if not controlling, weight upon this question. No evil consequences have been pointed out to us in the brief of defendant in error, which are liable to occur to the public welfare by the continuance of this policy, nor are we able to discern wherein there is any such change in conditions from those which have so long prevailed along this boundary, as would warrant the court in giving a new construction to the rights of riparian proprietors other than that which has been, at leastly tacitly, given by the public authorities for so long a time. Further, we see nothing in this doctrine which in anywise impairs or interferes with the public right of navigation over these waters. It is true that, while the Missouri river has been declared by congress to be a navigable stream, and while for many years during the early history of the great Northwest its

waters furnished almost the only channel of communication between the settled portions of the United States and the vast territory lying along its course and around its headwaters, still in later years, while intermittent attempts have been made to reestablish the river as a highway of commerce, the difficulties and disadvantages caused by its rapid current, its variable, erratic and inconstant course, and the crumbling nature of the soil upon its banks, have been so great that commerce has abandoned its waters and betaken itself to the more reliable, though perhaps more expensive, method of transportation by rail. Theoretically, therefore, the Missouri river is a navigable stream along the Nebraska boundary. Practically, at the present time, its usefulness as a public waterway has departed. However, in the consideration of this case we have treated it as if it were practically navigable, because, while improbable, it is not impossible that at some time in the future, under changed conditions, these waters may again become a channel of communication and intercourse.

We have seen that the common law rights of riparian owners as to accretions along the bank of this river is in force in this state; and it is a fact within the personal observation of the writer of this opinion that at some points on the boundary of this state, by virtue of the rapid accretions which sometimes take place along this stream, the present channel of the river is removed to a distance of more than a mile from where it was thirty years ago. If no injury is done to the public right by reason of the rapid and numerous changes of the channel of the Missouri river by the action of accretion, by the growth of sand bars and islands, and the gradual filling up of the intervening space between them and the bank, by which changes the bed where the river actually flowed is even more fully and effectually abandoned than where, by a sudden change, the river has left its bed and sought a new one, how can the public be in anywise injured by the latter form of abandonment? The effect is the same in both cases. Along the Missouri river the change of the

bed to dry land in the case of accretion is sometimes even more rapidly performed than the changes of the abandoned bed to dry land in the case of avulsion, for in such case the abandoned bed is usually full of water, which gradually evaporates, and which in many instances forms lakes which stand for years, occasionally filled again by the river in flood periods, a number of these "cut-off lakes," as they are locally termed, extending from three to eight or ten miles long and occupying practically the whole of the abandoned bed for many years.

The fact that the rights of riparian owners are preserved *ad flum aquæ* is not inconsistent with, and does not interfere with, the right of navigation. The public retains its easement of the right of passage along and over the waters of the river as a public highway. This is the interest of the public in connection with such rivers which is paramount, and which is and should be protected by the courts. If, however, the river ceases to be navigable at any particular point, whether by the gradual filling up of its old bed, or a part of it, by the process of accretion, or by a sudden change of its bed by the carving out of a new channel, the public right attaches to the waters of the new channel to the same extent as it did while it flowed in the former bed. The public, then, has lost nothing by the change of channel. All its rights have been retained. As was said long ago by Ulpian: "In like manner if a river leaves its bed and begins to flow elsewhere, whatever is done in the old bed is not subject to the interdict, because not done in a public river, as the bed belongs to the neighbors on each side, or else the bed belongs to the occupant if he has fields marked off thereon. Certainly the bed ceases to be public. Also the new channel which the river has made, although it was private, begins, nevertheless, to be public, because it is impossible that the channel of a public river should not be public." Ware, Roman Water Law, sec. 22. To hold otherwise in case of a stream of the characteristics of the Missouri river might well lead, by way of repeated changes of the

river's channel, to additions to the public domain at the expense of adjoining proprietors. For example, if in this case we should hold that the bed of the abandoned stream belonged to the state of Nebraska, by the same reasoning the bed of the new channel belongs to the state, and if the river should again change its channel near by, by another avulsion, thus leaving the new bed dry, the state then would be the owner of the land in two abandoned river beds and also of the bed of the new channel. The property in the second and third bed then would be wrested without compensation from the property of private individuals. A doctrine which might work such an injustice as this ought never to be adopted by a court if any other view is reasonable. The interest of the public in the waters and bed of a navigable river is analogous to that of the public in a public road. It has the right of passage over the stream as it has over the road. The owner of the land abutting upon a public road can do nothing in any way to interfere with the rights of the public in the same, nor can the riparian owner on the banks of a navigable stream exercise any dominion over its waters or over the bed thereof in any manner inconsistent with or opposed to the public easement. When the public entirely abandons a public road either by virtue of nonuser or by its vacation through proper proceedings, it does not retain the title to the land over which the easement of travel existed, but it reverts to the adjoining owners to the middle of the road. And so with a navigable river of this class, when by reason of natural changes the stream abandons the bed over which, through the instrumentality of its waters the public has the right to pass, the right of passage is as effectually abandoned at that point as when a road is vacated and a new one opened to take its place. The right of the public is to travel in the new road, and its right and privilege to pass over the old one revert to the abutting owners; and so with the river, the public right of navigation attaches to the new channel of the stream by virtue of the change of its waters, over which

alone the right of navigation can exist, and the abandoned bed, which is of no avail for public use as a means of travel, reverts to the riparian owners to the thread of the channel where the waters flowed. For these reasons, we are satisfied that the common law as to the rights of riparian owners to the abandoned channel of a navigable fresh water stream is applicable in Nebraska, and not inconsistent with our laws or constitution, and that therefore the plaintiff is the owner of the property in controversy in this action.

We have not deemed it necessary to cite or particularize more than a few of the large number of cases bearing upon the proposition hereinbefore discussed. They may be found collated and distinguished in Farnham, Waters; Gould, Waters; note to 23 English Ruling Cases, 158; Am. & Eng. Ency. Law (2d ed.), as well as in other standard works of reference. In several instances the courts of a state lying upon the one side of one of our great rivers hold and enforce the rule of the common law, and on the other side of the same river the courts of a sister state declare that the riparian owner only takes to high water or low water mark, as the case may be. On the whole matter, we deem it best to let well enough alone, and adhere to the custom and policy of this state since its earliest settlement. The former opinion in this case is set aside, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings in accordance with this opinion.

REVERSED.

C. H. LEE ET AL. V. F. F. BRITTAIN.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 13,935.

1. **Liquor Licenses: APPEAL.** A motion for a new trial is not necessary in order to obtain a review of the judgment of the district court entered on a hearing of an appeal taken from the order of a

Lee v. Brittain.

license board granting or refusing a license to sell intoxicating liquors. *Bennett v. Otto*, 68 Neb. 652, followed and approved.

2. —: STATUTES: AMENDMENT: BOND. The act of 1895 (laws 1895, ch. 22) is ineffectual as an amendment or repeal of section 6, chapter 50, Compiled Statutes 1903, which requires an applicant for liquor license to sell intoxicating liquors to give a bond in the sum of \$5,000, with at least two good and sufficient sureties, freeholders of the county in which the license is granted. *Fidelity & Deposit Co. of Maryland v. Libby*, 72 Neb. 850, followed and approved.

ERROR to the district court for Merrick county: JAMES G. REEDER, JUDGE. *Reversed*.

W. T. Thompson, for plaintiffs in error.

John Patterson, contra.

OLDHAM, C.

Plaintiffs herein were remonstrators against the application of the defendant for a license to sell intoxicating liquors in the village of Silver Creek, Nebraska. The license was granted by the village board, and an appeal taken by the remonstrators to the district court, where the action of the board was affirmed. To reverse this judgment of the district court, the remonstrators bring error to this court. The application was for a license beginning June 25, 1904, and ending May 1, 1905.

It is urged in the first instance by the defendant in error that we cannot review the proceedings had in the district court, because no motion for a new trial was filed in such court. This question, however, has been settled by this court in the case of *Bennett v. Otto*, 68 Neb. 652, in which we said:

"A motion for a new trial is not necessary in order to obtain a review of the judgment of the district court entered on the hearing of an appeal taken from the order of a license board granting or refusing a license to sell intoxicating liquors."

It is urged by the remonstrators that the court erred in

approving the action of the village board, because no bond was filed by the applicant with at least two good and sufficient sureties, freeholders of the county, before the license was granted, as required by section 6, chapter 50, Compiled Statutes 1903 (Ann. St. 7155). The bond filed and approved by the board was signed by the applicant, as principal, and by the Metropolitan Mutual Bond and Surety Company, as security. It is contended by counsel for the defendant in error that the bond given is sufficient under the provisions of chapter 22, laws 1895, authorizing the acceptance of certain corporations as sureties thereon. This contention, we think, is foreclosed by the opinion of this court in *Fidelity & Deposit Co. v. Libby*, 72 Neb. 850, in which we held that chapter 22, laws 1895, did not effect a repeal of section 9, chapter 10, Compiled Statutes of 1903 (Ann. St. 9008), which enacts that the official bonds of all county officers shall be executed by the principal "and at least two sufficient sureties, who shall be freeholders of the county." This provision, we held, referred to natural persons, and, as section 6, *supra*, contains the same requirement with reference to the bond of an applicant for a liquor license that section 9, *supra*, contains for official bonds, it would seem that we must hold the bond given insufficient.

It is therefore recommended that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

AMES and LETTON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the forgoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

REVERSED.

F. C. SMITH V. JOHN DELANE.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 13,852.

1. **Process: OBJECTIONS TO SERVICE.** Where a party makes a special appearance, objecting to the jurisdiction of the court because of irregularities in the service, it is incumbent upon him to point out the defects upon which he relies.
2. **Review: TRANSCRIPT.** In proceedings in error, the plaintiff is required to file a transcript of the proceedings of the lower court with his petition in error, and the original papers cannot be used as a substitute therefor nor as a supplement thereto, and, if filed, should be disregarded by the reviewing court.

ERROR to the district court for Custer county: BRUNO O. HOSTETLER, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

H. M. Sullivan, for plaintiff in error.

C. L. Gutterson and Hall, Woods & Pound, contra.

DUFFIE, C.

It appears from the record that the defendant in error brought suit against the plaintiff in error in a justice's court. There was some irregularity in the service of summons, and the plaintiff in error entered a special appearance and filed a motion to quash the service, which was overruled. The plaintiff in error made no further appearance in the case, and the defendant in error took judgment, from which the plaintiff in error prosecuted error to the district court. The district court affirmed the judgment of the justice of the peace, and the plaintiff in error brings the record here for review.

We think the judgment must be affirmed. The law is well settled that, where a party makes a special appearance, objecting to irregularities in the service of process, such objections must be specifically pointed out. *Bucklin v. Strickler*, 32 Neb. 602. One of the things necessary, then, in order to entitle the plaintiff in error to a judgment of reversal in the district court, was that he should present

Baker v. McDonald.

a record showing that he had specifically pointed out to the justice the defects on which he relied. This he failed to do. Section 586 of the code provides that "the plaintiff in error shall file with his petition a transcript of the proceedings." In *Moore v. Waterman*, 40 Neb. 498, this court held that the original papers could not be made to take the place of a transcript. In the case at bar, the plaintiff in error filed a transcript of the docket entries of the justice, and the original papers. As we have seen, there is no authority for the latter, and it will be presumed that the district court disregarded them and confined itself to the transcript. The transcript fails to state the grounds upon which the motion to quash was based. Consequently, confined as it was to the transcript, there was but one proper course for the district court, in the face of *Bucklin v. Strickler*, *supra*, and that was to affirm the judgment. We have not overlooked section 1008 of the code, which provides for filing the original papers with the transcript in cases appealed to the district court. But that section relates exclusively to appeals, whereas section 586, *supra*, relates exclusively to proceedings in error, and rules this case.

It is recommended that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

THOMAS BAKER V. PETER A. McDONALD.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 13,892.

1. **Sales: WHEN COMPLETE.** The general rule is that, when the terms of sale of personal property have been agreed on and the bargain is struck, and everything the seller has to do with the goods

Baker v. McDonald.

is complete, the contract of sale becomes absolute as between the parties without actual payment or delivery, and the property and the risk of accident to the goods vest in the buyer.

2. —: POSSESSION, RIGHT TO. Where the time of payment is not fixed by the contract of sale, the law presumes a cash sale, and, while title may have passed to the buyer, he is not entitled to possession until the full purchase price has been paid or tendered.
3. —: —: FRAUD. Where the amount to be paid is to be determined by measurement of the property to be made by the parties, a measurement which is grossly unfair, as the result of fraud or mistake, is not binding, and a tender based thereon does not entitle the purchaser to possession.
4. —: REPLEVIN: RESCISSION. Where the property has been set apart and identified, and title vested in the purchaser, who has paid part of the purchase price, but because of fraud or mistake in the measurement his tender of the balance due is not sufficient in amount, the seller may recover possession of the property from the purchaser by an action in replevin on the ground of special ownership and right of possession, but he cannot maintain such action under the claim of absolute ownership without rescinding the contract of sale and tendering back the amount paid.

ERROR to the district court for Dodge county: CONRAD HOLLENBECK, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

John P. Breen and C. E. Abbott, for plaintiff in error.

R. J. Stinson, H. C. Maynard and George L. Loomis, contra.

DUFFIE, C.

McDonald brought this action in replevin to recover from Baker certain hay of which he claims to be the absolute owner. On a trial to the court without a jury, judgment went in his favor, and Baker has brought the case here on error.

The parties entered into a contract relating to the hay in question and signed the following memorandum:

“FREMONT, NEB., Oct. 9, 1902.

“This day I have sold to Thomas Baker thirty stacks of hay at \$2.75 per ton in the stack, for which I have re-

ceived \$100. The hay is to be measured in the stack. This hay is to be moved off the ground before March 1, 1903.

"THOMAS BAKER.

"P. A. McDONALD."

There were more than 30 stacks in the field at the time the contract was made, and the particular stacks which Baker was to have were not set apart or designated, but it was understood that Baker might select them from the whole number in the field. Sometime after the contract was made, and before the hay was measured, Baker, at the request of McDonald, made a further payment of \$200, making \$300 paid on the contract price. Baker was unable to be present in person when the hay was measured, but was represented by a man of his own selection, who participated in that part of the transaction. The measurement was made of 31 stacks instead of 30, but of this no complaint is made by Baker. Baker took the figures of the measurements with him to Omaha and, after some delay, made a computation and found, as he claims, that the stacks contained 112 tons and a fraction. He then wrote the plaintiff, giving the measurements and result of his computation, and inclosing his check for \$8.40 as the balance due on the hay according to his measurements and computation. McDonald immediately returned the check, with a letter to the effect that he was not satisfied with the measurements. On receipt of this letter, Baker answered, saying that, if McDonald was not satisfied with the measurements, he could return the \$300 and have the hay. In the meantime Baker had commenced to bale the hay, and had shipped about 14 tons of it to Omaha. On receipt of Baker's last letter, McDonald went to the field where the hay was stacked, notified Baker's men not to press or ship any more of it, and then brought this action to recover possession of the hay, alleging that he was the absolute owner thereof.

The case was brought and tried on the theory that there was fraud or mistake in the measurement of the hay, and

that, instead of 112 tons, as claimed by Baker, there were in fact 140 tons. As the evidence supports the claim of McDonald that the stacks contained about 140 tons, the questions involved will have to be considered upon the theory that McDonald's claim of fraud or mistake in the measurement has been established. That McDonald was entitled to the possession of the hay until paid the purchase price is not a question open to dispute. The written memorandum of contract, as well as the contract itself, so far as appears from the oral evidence in the record, are silent as to the time of payment of the price of hay. The law, therefore, presumes a cash sale, that is, that payment and delivery were to be concurrent. Consequently, Baker was entitled to possession only upon payment in full or tender of the agreed price, unless there was a waiver of such payment by McDonald, and such waiver is not to be presumed by Baker's selection of the stacks that were to become his under the contract. McDonald replevied upon the ground of absolute ownership, and his right to recover depends upon the question of whether he had title to the hay when the action was commenced, or whether such title was in Baker. As before stated, McDonald undoubtedly had the right of possession until paid for the hay, but such right of possession, if title had passed to Baker, could not support his claim of absolute ownership, and would not allow evidence in support of his petition. An allegation of general ownership in an action of replevin is not supported by proof of a mere lien or other special ownership. *Sharp v. Johnson*, 44 Neb. 165, and cases cited in 2 Page's Digest, p. 1,815.

The material question to be determined, then, is, who held title to the hay at the time this action was commenced? The modern doctrine undoubtedly is that neither delivery nor payment of the purchase money is generally requisite for vesting title to personal property in the buyer under a contract of sale, it being necessary only that the identical goods which are the subject of the contract should be ascertained and the price fixed. New-

mark, Sales, sec. 159, gives the rule in the following language: "When the terms of sale are agreed on, and the bargain is struck, and everything the seller has to do with the goods is complete, the contract of sale becomes absolute as between the parties, without actual payment or delivery, and the property and the risk of accident to the goods vest in the buyer." 2 Schouler, Personal Property (3d ed.), sec. 243, is as follows: "Where specific chattels are embraced under a contract of immediate sale, and nothing remains to be done to them, the presumed intent of the parties is, that the right of property shall become transferred to the buyer and vest in him, immediately upon completion of the bargain by mutual assent. And even though the seller subsequently continue in possession of the goods, the presumption remains the same as between the parties; his possession being that of a bailee, with a right to recover his price."

When the contract for the sale of this hay was made between the parties, title did not then vest in Baker, because the stacks were thereafter to be selected by him; but, when his selection was made and the hay definitely ascertained and measured, then he became vested with the title and took all the risk of ownership. Had the hay been burned or otherwise destroyed, Baker, instead of McDonald, would have sustained the loss; and there can be no question that McDonald, immediately after the selection and measurement, might have sustained an action against Baker to recover the balance of the purchase price, and this on the theory that the title had passed. *Allen v. Rushfort*, 72 Neb. 907; *Barker v. Davies*, 47 Neb. 78. Had McDonald brought this action, claiming a special interest in the hay, there is no doubt that, upon proof of fraud or mistake in the measurement made, he would be entitled to a judgment giving him possession and determining the extent of his interest. His claim is that by a fraudulent or mistaken measurement it is sought to deprive him of about 28 tons of hay, of the value of \$77. Had his action been brought upon this theory, Baker could have tendered

Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Dowhower.

the amount, with costs, and retained possession of the hay, or, after the trial, could have paid the judgment given by the court, and both parties would have their full due—Baker the hay, and McDonald his money. Under the judgment appealed from, McDonald has \$300 of Baker's money and is found to be the absolute owner of the hay, in part payment of which that money was given him. We have no doubt, under the circumstances of this case, that McDonald could not recover as absolute owner without rescinding the contract of sale and tendering back the \$300 received on the purchase. His action, if he desired to replevy the hay, instead of suing for the amount due him, should have been for possession as the owner of a special interest in the hay, and not as the unqualified owner.

We recommend that the judgment be reversed and the cause remanded.

ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded.

REVERSED.

CHICAGO, BURLINGTON & QUINCY RAILROAD COMPANY V.
DORA M. DOWHOWER.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 13,924.

1. **Railroads: CROSSINGS: FENCING.** A railroad company is not required to fence its right of way across a public highway whether such highway is established by legal authority or by adverse user for the statutory time.
2. **Evidence examined,** and *held* not to show negligence in the operation of a train.

ERROR to the district court for Valley county: JOHN R. HANNA, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

A. M. Robbins, J. W. Deweese and Frank E. Bishop, for plaintiff in error.

Victor O. Johnson, contra.

DUFFIE, C.

Dora Dowhower sued the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Company to recover the value of two cows killed by the engine of a train running between Ord and Burwell. The plaintiff is the owner of 80 acres of land, through which the railroad track runs in a northwesterly and southeasterly direction, crossing the north line of her 80 acre tract a short distance east of its northwest corner. There is a public road on the west side of this 80 acre tract, and a traveled road on the north line of the 80, which crosses the right of way and tracks of the railroad company adjacent to the plaintiff's land. It is upon this road on the north side of the land where the cows were struck and killed by a freight train running northwest against a snow storm and heavy wind on the evening of December 2, 1902. The plaintiff seeks to recover upon two grounds: First, that the place where the cows were killed is not a public road, and the railroad company neglected to build a fence along its right of way at that point; and, second, that the engineer in charge of the engine was negligent in not using diligence to discover the cows in time to bring his engine to a stop before reaching them.

A careful reading of the evidence contained in the bill of exceptions convinces us that neither of these contentions can be sustained. While it is true that there is no public record of an established highway along the north line of the 80 acre tract owned by the plaintiff below, the evidence is uncontradicted that at the time of the construction of the railroad and since its construction a road has been maintained and traveled at this place. The railroad company undoubtedly thought that a public highway had been established along the north line of this 80, and

Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Dowhower.

constructed a cattle guard on the south side of such publicly traveled road. There is no conflict in the evidence that for 12 years or more this road has been maintained and traveled, and, if not regularly laid out by the county authorities, it has become by user a public highway. In *Roberts v. Quincy, O. & K. C. R. Co.* 43 Mo. App. 287, it is said:

"The statutory obligation of a railroad to fence the road does not extend to crossing of highways, whether *de jure* or *de facto*. Held, accordingly, in an action for the killing of stock, predicated on the failure of the railroad company to fence where its road crossed a highway, that it was immaterial whether the highway was maintained by work under a road overseer or not."

And in *Soward v. Chicago & N. W. R. Co.*, 33 Ia. 386, the court said:

"Shall we now so construe the statute requiring railroad companies to fence their roads, as to compel them to fence across these highways thus laid, which are not highways *de jure*, but only highways *de facto*? The statement of the question begets its own negation."

It is clear, therefore, that a public highway existed at the point where the cows were killed, and the railroad company was not required to fence its right of way at that point. The evidence is also conclusive that the employees in charge of the engine used all reasonable diligence to discover obstructions on the track and to halt the train as soon as danger to the cows was discovered. The record is clear that there was no negligence on the part of the company or its employees which caused the injury complained of, and we recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded.

ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded.

REVERSED.

MARGARET WALL ET AL. V. JAMES KERR ET AL.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 13,929.

ERROR to the district court for Howard county: JOHN B. HANNA, JUDGE. *Dismissed.*

A. A. Kendall, Frank J. Taylor and A. Wall, for plaintiffs in error.

W. H. Thompson, T. T. Bell and Rasmus Hannibal, contra.

DUFFIE, C.

The plaintiffs in error appealed from an order of the probate court for Howard county admitting to probate the will of Sarah Kerr. A trial was had in the district court, and a verdict returned sustaining the will. An appeal was taken by the contestants to this court. The transcript shows the verdict and a motion for a new trial, but no order disposing of the motion and no final judgment of the district court appear. For this reason, this court is without jurisdiction to entertain the case, and we recommend a dismissal of the appeal.

ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated above, the appeal is

DISMISSED.

WILLIAM L. WINSTON, APPELLANT, V. THOMAS A. ARMSTRONG ET AL., APPELLEES.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 13,857.

Evidence examined, and held insufficient to sustain the finding of the trial court.

APPEAL from the district court for Sheridan county: WILLIAM H. WESTOVER, JUDGE. *Reversed with directions.*

John J. Sullivan and W. W. Wood, for appellant.

C. Patterson, contra.

ALBERT, C.

This suit was brought for the foreclosure of a mortgage made by the defendant, Thomas A. Armstrong, on the 24th day of June, 1890, to secure a note of even date given by him to his father, payable in five years. The note was indorsed and the mortgage assigned to the plaintiff after maturity. Sometime after giving the note, the maker thereof married, and his wife is his codefendant in this suit. The defense is a want of consideration for the note. The court found generally for the defendants and entered a decree accordingly. The plaintiff brings the case here on appeal.

The plaintiff claims that the note was given for a half interest in a lot and store, stock of merchandise and some other personal property sold to the defendant, Thomas A. Armstrong, by his father. It is conclusively established that from 1888 to 1890 the defendant, Thomas A. Armstrong, and his father conducted a mercantile business under the firm name of T. A. Armstrong & Co., and the property in question was a part of the assets of the firm; that in 1890 the property was invoiced at \$4,200, and the father then transferred an undivided interest thereof to a third party; whereupon he retired, and Thomas A. and a

third party continued the business. The contention of the plaintiff is that, at the time the father transferred the half interest to such third party, he also transferred the remaining half interest to Thomas A., and that such was the consideration for the note in question. The testimony of Thomas A. is, in effect, that for some years after becoming of age he remained with his father, and assisted him in farming, and later in the sheep business, under an indefinite arrangement that he should have an interest therein; that afterwards, in 1888, they engaged as equal partners in the mercantile business in this state, as above mentioned, for which the father furnished the capital, and in which his father gave him a half interest in consideration of his services after becoming of age; that they continued in this business for about two years, when the father sold his interest to a third party, as hereinbefore mentioned; that afterwards, to relieve the father's mind of the fear of want in his old age, he gave him the note in question, with the understanding that the mortgage securing it should not be recorded, and that the principal should not be paid, but the interest should be paid during his father's lifetime, when the note should be returned to Thomas A. Thomas A. is corroborated by a witness who testified to statements made by Thomas A.'s father, some two years before the note was given, that he had given Thomas A. a half interest in the business in consideration for his services after he was of age. The same witness testified that after the note was given the father told him that it was given voluntarily and to guarantee him a life support. These alleged conversations took place more than ten years before the suit was tried. The witness was a stranger to the transaction, and it will not be presumed that he especially charged his memory with the conversations. Under such circumstances it would be next to impossible for the witness to recall the conversations as they actually occurred, and, of necessity, he would omit many of the details which, if recalled, might give the conversation a different meaning from that which

he, at this late day, gathers from it. Another witness, produced to corroborate Thomas A., testified to his understanding that the note was merely given for the support of the father, and not as a part of the purchase money for the half interest in the business; but he gave none of the conversations upon which his understanding in this behalf is based, nor does it appear that he had any conversations with the father upon which it could be based. Consequently, his evidence on this point is of no value.

On the other hand, Thomas A.'s testimony is flatly contradicted by that of his father, who testified positively that the consideration therefor was a half interest in the lot, building and personal property to which we have heretofore referred. It is further contradicted by the testimony of his brother, who drew the instruments in question, was present when they were executed, and heard the conversation, and who corroborates his father as to the consideration for the note. A sister, who was a member of the family at the time, testified to conversations had between her father and Thomas A. immediately prior to the giving of the note, to the effect that Thomas A. should give her father a note for the half interest in the business. She was not present when the transaction was finally consummated, but her evidence is entitled to weight, because it contradicts that of Thomas A., in which he claims to have been given the half interest in consideration of his past services to his father, because the conversations to which she testified took place long after the time at which he claims the half interest was thus transferred to him. Besides, the circumstances seem to corroborate the testimony of the father. It does not seem likely that a son, intending to provide a life income of some \$200 a year for his father, to that end would give his note, secured by mortgage, for \$2,100 with interest at 10 per cent., payable in five years. Again, the face of the note is for just one-half the value of the property mentioned, as shown by the invoice, and for precisely the same amount as that paid by the third party for the one-half interest in the prop-

erty in question which the father transferred to him. These coincidences are highly significant.

We have not overlooked the fact that for two years the mercantile business was carried on by Thomas A. and his father, under the firm name of T. A. Armstrong & Co. At first sight this would appear to corroborate Thomas A.'s version of the transaction strongly. But he was a member of his father's household. For years he had been the active manager of his father's affairs. Considerable sums of money belonging to his father had passed into his hands, and at least one considerable debt of his had been paid by his father. It does not appear that any settlement was ever had between them, unless it was at the close of the mercantile venture. At the close of that venture, as before stated, an inventory was taken, and the property was invoiced at \$4,200. For an undivided one-half a third party paid \$2,100, and at about the same time Thomas A. gave the note in suit for a like sum. From the history of the transaction we are satisfied that, whatever may have been the interest of Thomas A. in the firm of T. A. Armstrong & Co., he had none in the property in question, which alone is claimed to have furnished the consideration for the note, and which had been bought with his father's money, save such additions as had been bought out of the proceeds of the business.

The case is here for trial *de novo*, and, in view of all the facts and circumstances, the conclusion is forced upon us that the note was given for an undivided one-half of the building, lot, stock of merchandise and other personal property, as claimed by the plaintiff, and that the finding of the trial court that it was given without consideration is not sustained by sufficient evidence. It is therefore recommended that the decree of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded, with directions that an account be taken of the amount due on the note and a decree accordingly entered.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the decree of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded, with directions that an account be taken of the amount due on the note and a decree entered accordingly.

JUDGMENT ACCORDINGLY.

J. PETER JESSEN ET AL. V. CAROLINE M. WILLHITE.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 13,914.

1. **Intoxicating Liquors: SELLER'S LIABILITY.** One selling intoxicating liquor is liable, not only for the actual results of the sale, but for all damages growing out of the disqualification resulting from or contributed to by such sale, without reference to the time through which such disqualification may continue.
2. **Loss of Support: QUESTION FOR JURY.** Where a husband becomes an habitual drunkard, and abandons his family and ceases to provide for its support, whether such loss of support is permanent or otherwise is a question of fact for the jury.
3. ———: **ACTION: MITIGATION OF DAMAGES.** In an action by a wife to recover in behalf of herself and children for damages on account of the sale of liquor to her husband, in consequence of which sales he has become an habitual drunkard and has abandoned his family, the defendant is not entitled to show in mitigation of damages that the wife, since such abandonment, has commenced proceedings for divorce.
4. **New Trial: AFFIDAVITS.** Affidavits in support of a motion for a new trial on the ground of newly discovered evidence, which state that the defendant had used reasonable diligence to discover such testimony before the trial, but which fail to state the facts constituting such diligence, are insufficient.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county:
ALBERT J. CORNISH, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

J. B. Strode, E. F. Pettis and E. J. Murfin, for plaintiffs in error.

Stewart & Munger, contra.

ALBERT, C.

This action was brought by Caroline M. Willhite, in her own behalf and in behalf of her three minor children, against J. Peter Jessen and Henry Gies, saloon-keepers, and the American Bonding Company, surety on their license bonds, to recover for damages alleged to have been sustained by the plaintiff and her children by reason of sales of intoxicating liquors to the husband of the plaintiff and the father of said children. It is charged in the petition that on or about the 15th day of April, 1902, and from that day thereafter until April 15, 1903, the defendant saloon-keepers sold and furnished the said husband intoxicating liquors, and thereby caused him to become an habitual drunkard, and that from the 15th day of April, 1903, until August 1, 1903, the defendant Jessen continued to furnish said husband with intoxicating liquors in sufficient quantities to cause his intoxication, whereby he became an habitual drunkard. It is further charged that, by reason of his habitual drunkenness, said James A. Willhite was rendered unfit to labor and carry on his business, and it caused him to squander his earnings and rendered him unable and incapable to furnish the plaintiff and her children any support, and caused him to abscond, abandon and desert his said family, and thereby deprived his family of his earnings, support and maintenance. The action was commenced in 1903, and at the time the oldest child of the plaintiff was 13 and the youngest 8 years of age. The evidence shows that the plaintiff was married to her husband and resided with him in the state of Kansas until the spring of 1902, when he came to the city of Lincoln, in this state, where he found employment as a stone-mason. He resided with his family in this state for something more than a year, when he absconded and abandoned his family. It sufficiently appears that, although he occasionally drank to excess before coming to Lincoln, he spent his evenings at home, was kind to his family and contributed from \$50 to \$60 a month to their support, and had an

earning capacity of about \$4 50 a day; that he brought with him to Lincoln something like \$250 in money. Shortly after his arrival in Lincoln, he began to frequent the saloons of the defendants Jessen and Gies, and to drink to excess, and in consequence became an habitual drunkard, unfit to work or follow his trade, and in consequence contributed practically nothing to the support of his family, and since his abandonment of his family has contributed nothing whatever to their support; and the plaintiff, although she has made diligent inquiry, has been unable to ascertain his whereabouts. The \$250 which he brought with him to Lincoln, as well as \$25 which he borrowed and for which he pledged the household furniture as security, were squandered in drink. At the date of the trial he was 36 years of age. The jury returned a verdict for the full amount claimed, but the court ordered a remittitur of \$1,000, which was entered, and judgment was given for \$4,000. The defendants bring error.

That the evidence is sufficient to sustain a verdict in favor of the plaintiff is tacitly conceded, but the defendants contend that the judgment is excessive, and their contention on this point is thus summed up in their brief: "We contend that the defendants Jessen and Gies would not be liable in damages for making Willhite a drunkard, but only for the loss of the means of support during the period they continued to furnish him liquors. This period of time was less than 18 months." We do not believe that contention can be upheld, in view of the construction which this court has heretofore placed on that portion of our liquor laws relating to civil damages. In *Wardell v. McConnell*, 23 Neb. 152, the court, referring to the traffic in intoxicants, said:

"If such sale is made, the person making it is not only liable for the actual results of that sale, but liable for all damages growing out of the disqualification, without reference to the length of time through which it may continue."

In *Stahnka v. Krcitle*, 66 Neb. 829, the following lan-

guage of Mr. Commissioner AMES was approved by the court:

"One who has converted another from a sober and industrious life into an habitual drunkard is responsible for all the financial losses due to his act, including those caused by the subsequent thriftless and dissipated career of his victim, directly resulting therefrom."

When damages result from the sale of intoxicating liquors, every one who contributes to such result is a wrongdoer and liable. *Elshire v. Schuyler*, 15 Neb. 561; *McClellan v. Hein*, 56 Neb. 600, and cases cited. It is true that in this case the defendant saloon-keepers did not transform the husband from a sober man into an habitual drunkard, because he was more or less addicted to the excessive use of intoxicants before they sold to him. But they did take up the work when others had left off, and as a result of their sales his appetite for strong drink was fed and encouraged, until he was transformed from a man who, although addicted to the excessive use of intoxicating drinks, was kind to his family, and supported them by working at his trade, to one who became unfit for work, contributed practically nothing to the support of his wife and children, and who, regardless of the ties of nature, abandoned his family and became a vagabond. Whether such conditions will continue seems to be purely a question of fact for the jury, to be determined from all the facts and circumstances in evidence. And we are satisfied from the record in this case that the jury were fully warranted in finding that the plaintiff and her children were permanently deprived of the means of support which the husband would have furnished, but for his habitual drunkenness. That being true, in view of his age, his earning capacity before the defendants began to supply him with liquors, and the other facts and circumstances shown in evidence, a judgment of \$4,000 cannot be regarded as excessive.

Our attention has been called to *Roberts v. Taylor*, 19 Neb. 184, where, on a state of facts in many respects similar to those involved in the case at bar, on a judgment of

\$995.66½, this court ordered a remittitur of all in excess of \$700. But that case differs from the present in two important particulars: There the husband still continued to reside with his family and to contribute to some extent to their support; his earning capacity was but \$1.50 a day. In the case at bar the husband, whose earning capacity was \$4.50 a day, has abandoned his family and contributes nothing to their support. Besides, it would appear that in the former case the court was influenced to some extent by the fact that a portion of the time the liquor was furnished with the wife's consent. In this case it does not appear that the wife consented to any of the sales of liquor to her husband, and, if she had, under *Gran v. Houston*, 45 Neb. 815, decided long after the *Roberts* case, it would be no defense.

The evidence shows that sometime after the husband deserted his family, the plaintiff instituted a suit for divorce on the grounds of drunkenness and nonsupport. This suit was pending when the case at bar was tried, and there is evidence tending to show that the plaintiff would not live with her husband, even if he should return sober. The following instruction, based on the foregoing evidence, was tendered by the defendants: "The jury are instructed that if you find from the evidence that the plaintiff has commenced an action for divorce against her husband, James A. Willhite, and you further find from the evidence that she would not live with him again under any circumstances as his wife, if he should return to her, then you cannot allow her damages for the loss of the means of support beyond the date of the commencement of such action for divorce." The instruction was properly refused. The action is not for damages for the loss of the society and companionship of the husband, but for damages to the means of support of the plaintiff and her children. If they have been permanently deprived of his support, and the jury were warranted in finding that they were, the sentiments the plaintiff may entertain toward her husband at this time, as well as her speculations as to whether she

would receive him, should he return sober, are wholly immaterial.

Another contention of the defendants is that their motions for a new trial on the ground of newly discovered evidence were overruled. The motions are supported by affidavits. The alleged newly discovered evidence relates to the habits of the plaintiff's husband before coming to Lincoln. All these affidavits, with the possible exception of two, instead of setting out the particular efforts which had been made to procure the evidence for use at the trial, aver the bare conclusion that the defendants had used due diligence, and are clearly insufficient. *Goracke v. Hintz*, 13 Neb. 390; *Tomer v. Densmore*, 8 Neb. 384; *Heady v. Fishburn*, 3 Neb. 263. The two affidavits mentioned as possible exceptions were made by one of the defendants and his attorney, and show of themselves that the affiants were informed before the trial where the husband had resided with his family before coming to Lincoln, and that they were put in possession of information which, had they used it with reasonable diligence, would have led to the discovery of the evidence which they now claim would be forthcoming on another trial. A new trial on the grounds of newly discovered evidence is only allowable when such evidence "could not, with reasonable diligence, have been discovered and produced at the trial." As reasonable diligence was not shown, the motions were properly overruled.

Complaint is made of certain instructions given by the court on its own motion, but such complaint is disposed of, we think, by what has been said with respect to the defendants' first contention.

It is therefore recommended that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

J. W. TEMPLIN V. GEORGIA KIMSEY.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 13,933.

1. **Pleading: JURISDICTION, WANT OF.** Where the want of jurisdiction does not appear upon the face of the record, it may be pleaded with other defenses in the answer.
2. ———: ———. That the defendant in a case of that kind first raised the question of jurisdiction on a special appearance, which was overruled, does not affect his right to include a plea to the jurisdiction with other defenses in his answer.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: LANCOLN FROST, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

Tibbets & Anderson, for plaintiff in error.

George A. Adams, contra.

ALBERT, C.

This suit was brought before a justice of the peace of Lancaster county. The return to the summons is regular on its face, and shows that service was made on the defendant by leaving a copy at his usual place of residence in said county. On the return day the defendant entered a special appearance, objecting to the jurisdiction of the court on the ground that he was a resident of Merrick county, and had no place of residence in Lancaster county at the time the summons purports to have been served. The objection was overruled, and the defendant entered no further appearance at that time. The justice gave judgment in favor of the plaintiff, and within 10 days thereafter the defendant appeared before the justice, paid the costs, and asked to have the judgment set aside in pursuance of the provisions of section 1,001 of the code relating to the setting aside of judgments taken by default before a justice of the peace, at the same time filing an answer, containing, among other things, a plea to the

jurisdiction of the justice based on the same ground as that urged in his special appearance. The justice set aside the judgment, and upon the hearing of the cause gave judgment in favor of the defendant. The plaintiff appealed to the district court, where the defendant, among other defenses, again entered a plea to the jurisdiction of the court. On plaintiff's motion this plea was stricken from the answer, and upon a trial on the merits the jury found for the plaintiff, and the court gave judgment accordingly.

The sole question in the case arises on the ruling of the court on the plaintiff's motion to strike the plea to the jurisdiction of the court from the answer. The plaintiff contends that, when the defendant appeared before the justice for the purpose of having the judgment set aside, he submitted himself to the jurisdiction of the court, and waived the want of due service of process. In urging this proposition there is a failure to distinguish between those cases where the want of service, or some defect or irregularity therein, appears on the face of the record, and involves merely a question of law, and those where such want or defect does not thus appear, but is based on a state of facts *dehors* the record. In the latter class of cases it is well settled that the want of jurisdiction may be pleaded with other defenses in the answer. The rule is exhaustively discussed by Commissioner RYAN in *Hurlburt v. Palmer*, 39 Neb. 158, and has been reaffirmed in the following cases: *Herbert v. Wortendyke*, 49 Neb. 182; *Kyd v. Exchange Bank*, 56 Neb. 557; *Barry v. Wachosky*, 57 Neb. 534; *Anheuser-Busch Brewing Ass'n v. Peterson*, 41 Neb. 897; *Baker v. Union Stock Yards Nat. Bank*, 63 Neb. 801. That the defendant appeared specially for the purpose of objecting to the jurisdiction of the justice, and such objection was overruled before the filing of the answer including a plea to the jurisdiction, however material to other questions, is immaterial for the purposes of the question under discussion, or any question presented in the argument. *Barry v. Wachosky, supra*. That the de-

First State Bank of Overton v. Stephens Bros.

fendant had a right to interpose a plea to the jurisdiction in the district court is clear from the authorities cited, and it follows that the court erred in sustaining the motion to strike that plea from the answer.

It is recommended that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings according to law.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reason stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings according to law.

REVERSED.

FIRST STATE BANK OF OVERTON V. STEPHENS BROTHERS.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 13,830.

Estoppel. Where a party gives a reason for his decision and conduct touching anything involved in a controversy, he is estopped after litigation has begun from changing his ground and putting his conduct on another and different consideration.

ERROR to the district court for Dawson county: BRUNO O. HOSTETLER, JUDGE. Affirmed.

E. A. Cook, for plaintiff in error.

Warrington & Stewart, contra.

JACKSON, C.

On September 24, 1902, J. T. Bend drew a check on the First State Bank of Overton for the sum of \$111.35, payable to Stephens Brothers. Two days later this check was presented at the bank for payment by one of the members of the firm of Stephens Brothers and payment was refused, thereupon Stephens Brothers sued the bank

to recover the amount of the check. In their petition they set out the corporate capacity of the bank, the execution and delivery of the check, the presentation thereof at the bank and the demand for the payment thereof, and alleged "that said defendant bank refused to pay said check, and stated as the reason for refusing to pay the same that said Bend had instructed it not to pay the same, and gave no other reason for not paying the same." They further alleged that Bend had on deposit in the bank money sufficient to pay the check, and that no part of the same had been paid, and prayed judgment for the amount of the check with interest and costs. The bank answered, admitting its corporate capacity, the making and presentation of the check, and that the same was not paid, and denied all other allegations in the petition. At the trial it was conclusively proved by competent evidence, and in fact admitted by the cashier of the bank, that at the time the check was presented the bank refused payment, and gave as the only reason why the check was not paid that payment had been stopped by the maker. The member of the firm of Stephens Brothers who presented the check for payment testified that at the time the bank refused to pay the check he inquired of the cashier whether Bend had money on deposit in the bank, and that the cashier answered that Bend always had funds in the bank. On behalf of the defendant the cashier testified that at the time the check was presented for payment Bend had no money on deposit in the bank, and he denied having made the statement to the plaintiff at the time the check was presented that Bend always had funds in the bank. There was a total failure to prove any fact justifying the course of the drawer of the check in attempting to stop the payment thereof. The trial resulted in a verdict and judgment for the plaintiff for the amount of the check, with interest, and the bank prosecutes error.

The principal contention of the bank is that the maker of the check had no funds in the bank at the time the check was presented for payment, and that by reason of

that fact no liability was incurred by reason of the refusal of the bank to pay the check. If the claim of a lack of funds was well founded, it would have been a complete defense in this action had it disclosed that fact to the payee at the time the check was presented for payment, but instead of doing so the bank chose to base its refusal upon the ground that payment thereof had been stopped by the maker, and the claim of a lack of funds was first made after the litigation had commenced. The rule in this jurisdiction is that, where a party gives a reason for his decision and conduct touching anything involved in a controversy, he is estopped, after litigation has begun, from changing his ground and putting his conduct on another and different consideration. *Ballou v. Sherwood*, 32 Neb. 666; *Frenzer v. Dufrene*, 58 Neb. 431; *State v. Board of County Commissioners*, 60 Neb. 566; *Hixson Map Co. v. Nebraska Post Co.*, 5 Neb. (Unof.) 388. The judgment in this case might well be permitted to stand solely on account of the reason given by the bank for the nonpayment of the check at the time it was presented for payment. It is worthy of notice, however, that the testimony on behalf of the plaintiff tends to prove that the maker of the check did have funds in the bank at the time the check was presented, and, while the cashier of the bank denies having made the statement that Bend always had funds in the bank, and testified that he had no money on deposit there at the time the check was presented, it cannot be said that the jury might not, with considerable reason, have found against the bank on that contention. The conclusion already reached disposes of assignments of error numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 14 and 16.

In the cross-examination of the cashier of the bank, counsel for plaintiff inquired if he would not have paid the check, in any event, had the maker not ordered payment stopped. An objection was interposed that this was improper cross-examination; the objection was overruled, and the witness answered that he would probably have paid the check. The admission of this evidence on cross-

examination is assigned as error. If the court erred in admitting this evidence it was entirely without prejudice to the bank, because under the admitted facts the verdict could not have been otherwise than for the plaintiff.

There was also a request to instruct the jury that the giving of the check by Bend to plaintiff was not a payment of the account owed by Bend to the plaintiff. This instruction was refused, and upon the refusal error is assigned. It is said by counsel that this instruction was necessary, because the jury may have understood that the giving of the check by Bend was an absolute payment, and that he was thereby released, and that they probably found for the plaintiff on that theory. This contention cannot be sustained. The court properly refused to give the instruction requested.

Complaint is also made of the giving of instruction numbered 4 as follows: "You are instructed as a matter of law that J. T. Bend, after giving said check, could not arbitrarily countermand the payment of the same." It is said that this instruction tended to mislead the jury. There seems to be no force in the contention, and it doubtless states a correct principle of law as applied to the facts in this case.

Instruction numbered 6 is as follows: "You are instructed that the burden of proof is upon the plaintiff, and he must satisfy you by a preponderance of all the material allegations of his petition, and if you find the evidence evenly balanced, or that it preponderates in favor of the defendant, then your verdict should be for the defendant." A similar instruction was under consideration in *City of Lexington v. Fleharty*, p. 626, *post*, in an opinion delivered at the present sitting of the court, and was there held not to be erroneous, although faulty, because of the omission of the words "of all the evidence" after the word "preponderance." In this case it might be said that the instruction, whether erroneous or not, must be held to be without prejudice, because the evidence would have justified a peremptory instruction to find for the plaintiff.

Arnout v. Chadwick.

We discover no prejudicial error in the record, and recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

EDNA ARNOUT, APPELLEE, v. WILLIAM J. CHADWICK,
APPELLANT.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 13,877.

1. Judgment: VACATING: FRAUD. To justify a trial court in setting aside a decree rendered at a former term on the ground of fraud, it is not necessary that actual fraud should be found. It is sufficient if facts and circumstances are proved from which constructive fraud can be inferred, if by reason of such facts and circumstances the party seeking to avoid the decree was induced to make no appearance in the cause in which the decree was rendered.
2. Evidence examined, and held sufficient to justify the district court in vacating a former decree of that court.

APPEAL from the district court for Douglas county:
ALEXANDER C. TROUP, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

T. J. Nolan and F. A. Brogan, for appellant.

Jefferis & Howell, contra.

JACKSON, C.

This is an appeal from a decree of the district court for Douglas county, setting aside a former decree rendered in that court. It appears from the pleadings and the evidence that the appellant, defendant herein, on November 7, 1903, filed a petition in equity against the appellee,

plaintiff herein, to compel the conveyance of certain real estate in Douglas county, which it was alleged the appellee held for him in trust. Personal service of summons was had on the appellee, who failed to appear, and on the 28th day of December of that year the appellee was defaulted, and upon a hearing to the court a decree was entered conforming to the prayer of the petition. After the adjournment of the term in which said decree was entered, and on the 19th day of March, 1904, the appellee filed a petition containing allegations which, if true, would constitute a complete defense to the appellant's cause of action in the cause in which the decree was entered, and, as a reason for not appearing and defending in that action, alleged that on the day after the process therein had been served upon her she called upon the appellant for an explanation of the proceeding, and that thereupon the appellant stated "that his temper had been aroused; that he had gone to an attorney, who advised him to bring suit, but that he would have the case thrown out of court and dismissed, and received from this plaintiff a copy of the order of court before served upon her, as above mentioned, and put the same in his pocket, and told this plaintiff that it was all right, that there would be nothing more to the case, and that this plaintiff should not bother any more about it; that plaintiff relied upon the statements and representations of this defendant, and believed that he was acting in good faith, and that the case which the defendant had brought in court would be dismissed, and that she would have no further trouble in relation to the matter." She further alleged that, relying upon the statements and representations of the appellant, she made no appearance, by answer or otherwise, in said action, and believed that the case had been dismissed, until some four or five days prior to the filing of her petition for a new trial. She further alleged that the decree obtained by the appellant was procured upon perjured testimony. Upon her petition for a new trial issue was joined, and after a hearing to the court the decree assailed by her petition was vacated

and a new trial ordered. From the judgment vacating the decree and allowing a new trial an appeal was taken to this court, and we are asked to reverse the judgment of vacation for two reasons: First, because the decree is not supported by the evidence and is contrary to the evidence, and, second, because the district court did not find the existence of fraud alleged in the plaintiff's petition. We will consider these questions in order as they are presented.

The evidence upon controverted questions of fact was adduced through the examination of witnesses in open court. There was a sharp conflict in the testimony of these witnesses, and it is impossible to reconcile their statements upon the theory that they all adhered rigidly to the truth. For that reason, considerable weight will be given to the findings of the trial judge, who saw the witnesses in court, observed their demeanor and deportment while testifying, and who, for that reason, was, by far, better qualified to form a correct conclusion as to the weight to be given to their testimony. The appellee, as a witness in her own behalf, testified, in substance, that the process in the action instituted against her by appellant was served on the 9th day of November; that on the following day she went to the place of business of the appellant, took the papers to him and asked him what he meant; that he said to her that she need not pay any attention, that he was a little riled in temper and had consulted a lawyer and told him to go ahead, that she should pay no more attention to it, and that he would throw it out of court; that she handed the papers back to him and did not pay any more attention to it; that she did not know of his having proceeded with the case and procured a decree until the 8th day of March following; that the decree was entered while she was away on her wedding trip. Her testimony is to some extent sustained by facts and circumstances proved at the hearing. The appellant on his own behalf, in substance, testified that the appellee came to his store with the papers which had been served on her in the suit instituted by him, and said: "This is a nice thing for a

man like you, that thinks he is a gentleman, to try and bring a lady into court. I am too much of a lady to bring a lady into court, if you are not more of a gentleman to bring a lady into court." She took the papers and fired them on top of the show-case. I said: "You had better take the papers and see some attorney and defend yourself, if you have a claim to this property." We had a few different words. He denied the statements made by the appellee relative to the conversation on that occasion. The evidence disclosed some facts and circumstances tending to support his statements. We have, however, examined the entire record with considerable care, and, taking into consideration the opportunities for determining the truth enjoyed by the trial judge, which by reason of circumstances are denied to this court, we do not feel justified in disturbing the decree as being against the weight of evidence.

This brings us to a consideration of the second ground urged for a reversal of the decree, that the court did not find the existence of fraud alleged in the plaintiff's petition. The finding of the district court in that respect is in the following language: "That the plaintiff herein, defendant therein, in the cause in which said decree was entered, was served with summons thereon on the 9th day of November, 1903, and that thereafter, to wit, on the 10th day of November, 1903, this plaintiff, then Edna Howell, took the summons to the plaintiff therein, defendant herein, and then and there, at the place of business of the defendant herein, plaintiff therein, delivered said summons to the defendant herein, plaintiff therein, and at said time the said Chadwick and this plaintiff had a conversation concerning the suit in which the said summons was issued and served, wherein the said Chadwick, by words, acts and conduct, induced this plaintiff to believe that he had commenced said suit while in anger, and that he did not intend to prosecute the same to decree, and that he would not so prosecute said cause, and further induced this plaintiff to believe that he would cause said suit to be dismissed and

thrown out of court, and further informed this plaintiff that she need give no further attention to said suit, and that this plaintiff relied upon said statements, conduct, and inducements, and, by reason thereof, gave no further attention to said litigation, and made no appearance therein to protect her rights in the property in question, and that this plaintiff, defendant therein, was justified, by reason of the conversation with said plaintiff therein, his acts and conduct, in relying upon her belief that said action would not be further prosecuted, and would be dismissed without proceeding to decree. This court does not deem it necessary to find that the defendant herein, in said conversation mentioned, deliberately, purposely and wilfully, intended, by his said acts and conduct, to work a fraud upon this plaintiff, but does find that the acts, conduct and conversation on the said 10th day November between said parties, and the subsequent taking of said decree, as herein found, were such as to constitute a fraud in law upon this plaintiff, the defendant therein."

It is contended by appellant that, to justify a court of equity in setting aside a former decree and judgment rendered upon proper process and pleadings, it is necessary that there should exist actual fraud, not legal or technical fraud, and that the findings of the district court do not come within that rule. We do not think it important to inquire into the reasons given by the trial court for the conclusion which followed. If the conclusion is right, then it should be sustained, notwithstanding the fact that the district court may have given a wrong reason. We cannot agree with counsel, however, in their contention that actual fraud must be shown. In *Klabunde v. Byron Reed Co.*, 69 Neb. 126, 136, it is held that equity will relieve against a judgment or decree on the ground of fraud, actual or constructive, committed by the successful party, or where, from excusable neglect, a defendant has been prevented from interposing a meritorious defense or establishing grounds entitling him to affirmative relief in such action, and Mr. Justice HOLCOMB, in delivering the

opinion of the court, made use of the following language:

"We do not say there has been any action on the part of defendant or for which it should be held responsible, which worked an actual fraud on the plaintiff's rights. It is not necessary that we should, nor do we think we would be warranted in so saying. There is, however, sufficient in the record to warrant the inference that he has suffered a wrong which equity will relieve against. There is at least constructive fraud. The plaintiff was lulled into a feeling of ease and safety, because of what he understood and what he was justified in believing was the promise and agreement of the defendant and because of the information received from its counsel, who undertook to represent him also in the litigation."

The rule there announced is an appropriate one for the case at bar. We hold, therefore, that the findings of the district court were amply sufficient upon which to base the judgment vacating the former decree.

No question is raised in this hearing as to the sufficiency of the showing on the part of the appellee that she had a good and meritorious defense to the action instituted against her by appellant.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court vacating its former decree be affirmed and that the cause be remanded for further proceedings.

DUFFIE, C., concurs. ALBERT, C., not sitting.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court vacating its former decree is affirmed and the cause is remanded for further proceedings.

AFFIRMED.

CITY OF LEXINGTON V. HENRY C. FLEHARTY.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 13,910.

1. *Res Gestae*. A declaration to be part of the *res gestae* need not necessarily be coincident in point of time with the main fact proved; it is enough that the two are so clearly connected that the declaration can be said to be a spontaneous expression of the fact or condition.
2. Instructions examined, and *held* to have fairly stated the law applicable to the case; and the evidence examined, and found to have justified the submission of the case to the jury.

ERROR to the district court for Dawson county: BRUNO O. HOSTETLER, JUDGE. *Affirmed*.

G. W. Fox and *E. A. Cook*, for plaintiff in error.

H. D. Rhea and *H. B. Fleharty*, *contra*.

JACKSON, C.

The city of Lexington prosecutes error from the district court for Dawson county to reverse a judgment of that court against the city and in favor of the defendant in error. The parties will be designated as they were in the court below, the defendant in error herein being described as plaintiff, and the plaintiff in error as defendant.

Plaintiff's cause of action was based on a personal injury which he claims to have sustained by reason of a defective sidewalk. The statement in his petition, omitting the formal allegations, is, substantially: That Washington street, between Fifth and Sixth streets, is one of the main public thoroughfares and business streets in the city of Lexington, and is at a place where there is much travel, and that condition had existed for a long time prior to the injury complained of; that the sidewalk on the west side of the street at the place stated was built on supports running lengthwise of the street, with planks nailed thereon, six inches in width and twelve feet in length;

that by reason of the standing of water under the walk and improper supports the walk had settled in the center and remained in a swayed and sunken condition, and that thereby the ends of the planks had tipped up and were there higher than in the center of the walk; that for the reasons stated the walk had become defective and badly out of repair, and in a dangerous and unsafe condition, uneven on the surface; that some of the planks had been allowed to become loose and had remained loose for a long time prior to the injury, and that the defendant had neglected to keep the same in suitable repair and in a safe condition for travel thereon; that some of the planks had been removed, and left dangerous holes in the walk, and the planks that were remaining in their apparent places in such loosened condition were so concealed as to position that a person walking along on said sidewalk could not observe such condition without close inspection thereof, and the walk was thereby extrahazardous and dangerous to travel upon; that the city had actual and constructive notice of the defect in the walk at the time of the accident, and for a long time prior thereto; that by reason of not having the same repaired, and providing to warn persons passing over the same, it was guilty of want of proper care and of gross negligence; that on the 12th day of December, 1902, while the plaintiff was passing along over this walk to the post office, in company with another person, the person with whom he was walking stepped on one of the loosened planks, which was apparently in a proper position; that the plank was forced upward in front of the plaintiff, who did not observe the same; that his foot was caught, and he tripped and was thereby thrown down onto the walk with great force and violence, and sustained a serious injury; that the injury was caused without negligence on his part; that it was of a permanent nature, and as a result he had suffered great pain constantly since the accident, and had been rendered unable to properly attend to his business. The defendant's answer was a denial of all of the allegations of the petition,

except the corporate capacity of the defendant, and an allegation that, by the use of reasonable care and caution, the plaintiff would not have fallen and been injured. The reply was a general denial. The trial was to the court and a jury, resulting in a verdict and judgment for \$1,500, favorable to the plaintiff. The questions presented for consideration to this court, taken in their natural order, are: First, the rulings of the court on the admission of evidence; second, instructions by the court; and lastly, the sufficiency of the proof to sustain the verdict and judgment.

George Auble, a witness on behalf of the plaintiff, after having testified that he was with the plaintiff when the injury occurred, and to the circumstances of the fall sustained by the plaintiff, was asked: "Q. Did you learn the result of that fall? A. No, sir. Q: I mean, did you make any inquiry? A. I asked him if he was hurt, and he said he was." The defendants moved to strike out the last answer as incompetent and immaterial. The motion was overruled and exception taken. It is claimed that this statement by the plaintiff was not a part of the *res gestæ*; that it was not a spontaneous explanation, as the witness did not ask the plaintiff if he was hurt until after he got up. This contention cannot be sustained. The authorities cited by defendant are *City of Friend v. Burlough*, 53 Neb. 674, and *Union P. R. Co. v. Elliott*, 54 Neb. 299. In neither case do we find support for the rule which we are asked to apply here. In the former it did not appear when the declaration was made or how soon after the injury, and it was held that the declaration was properly excluded. In the latter a declaration made at the place and within a few moments after the injury was sustained was held to have been properly admitted as a part of the *res gestæ*. From the testimony of the witness it appears that plaintiff got up almost immediately after the fall, and that it was just after he got up that this statement was made, and the admission of the statement was clearly within the rule that the declaration to

be a part of the *res gesta* need not necessarily be coincident in point of time with the main fact proved; it is enough that the two are so clearly connected that the declaration can in the ordinary course of affairs be said to be a spontaneous expression.

Complaint is also made of the ruling of the court on the admission of the evidence of the witness Malcolm, who was marshal and street commissioner of defendant at the time the accident occurred, and had been for some months prior thereto. The evidence complained of relates to the condition of the sidewalk at the place where the plaintiff fell, and to some extent the condition of the walks generally in the city for some months prior to the time of the accident, and the efforts made by the street commissioner to induce the city council to repair the same, and was, in our judgment, admissible for the purpose of charging the defendant with notice of the dangerous condition of the walk. It is probably true that evidence of the condition of the sidewalks generally in the city would not be sufficient to entitle the plaintiff to recover, but where, as in this case, the testimony of the witness did cover the condition of the walk at the exact place where the injury was sustained, and disclosed that the walk was out of repair and in an unfit and dangerous condition, no prejudice could arise by reason of the statement of the witness with reference to walks generally in the city.

In the first paragraph of the instructions the court defined the issues as presented by the petition, and in doing so quoted largely from the allegations of the petition, and included an allegation found in the petition in this language: "Plaintiff further alleges that he made out an account in writing, setting forth the character of his injury and the time and place of its occurrence, as required by law, on the 11th day of June, 1903, filed the same with the city council of the city of Lexington, and said council on the 24th day of June, 1903, disallowed the same." It is said that, as the law does not require claims such as the plaintiff makes in this case to be presented to the council

of cities of the class of the defendant, the giving of this instruction was erroneous, and authorities are cited by counsel for defendant, holding that in such cases a sworn statement of the injury presented to the city council is not admissible in a subsequent action for such injury. It appears, however, that at the trial all evidence offered on behalf of the plaintiff with respect to the filing of this claim and the action of the city council with reference thereto was, on objection, excluded, so that the authorities cited are not in point. By section 80, article I, chapter 14, Compiled Statutes, 1903 (Ann. St. 8759), it is provided that "no costs shall be recovered against such city or village in any action brought against it for any unliquidated claim, which has not been presented to the city council or board of trustees to be audited," and in view of that provision of the code the allegation complained of was properly included in the petition, although not necessarily so, and, while all reference to that allegation might well have been omitted from the instruction, it is difficult to see how the jury could have been prejudiced by its incorporation into the instruction, especially in view of the fact that the court in the presence of the jury excluded all evidence tending to sustain the allegation.

Complaint is also made about paragraph 4 of the instructions, which recites: "You are instructed that this action is founded upon certain alleged acts of negligence and failure to use ordinary care." It is said that this instruction is wrong, because its effect is to leave the jury to guess at something, and it might as easily have guessed wrong as right. Instructions 5 and 6 which immediately follow are devoted, however, to defining negligence and ordinary care. No complaint is made about the definitions given by the court, and we fail to see any force in the objection to instruction 4.

In instruction 10 the court said to the jury: "You are instructed that, before you can find for the plaintiff, you must find that the plaintiff has suffered injury, that the

injury was caused by a defect in the sidewalk, that said defect left the sidewalk in an unreasonably dangerous condition, that the plaintiff did not contribute to the said injury by any negligence on his part, that the city authorities had actual knowledge of said defect in time to have repaired same before the accident happened, or that the defect had been notorious and continued for a length of time within which the city authorities, in the exercise of reasonable care and diligence, could have known of the same." The complaint about this instruction is that it does not require the jury to find the facts stated from the evidence. It is conceded in the brief of counsel for defendant that this instruction sets out the essential facts that the jury must find to entitle the plaintiff to recover. The jury were, however, properly instructed by other instructions as to the burden of proof, and the instruction in question is hardly susceptible of the construction placed upon it by counsel.

Defendant complains again of the giving of instruction 11. This instruction is as follows: "You are instructed that ordinary and reasonable care required of plaintiff is that degree of care which might reasonably be expected from an ordinarily prudent person under the circumstances surrounding him at the time. If you should find from the evidence that at the time and prior thereto plaintiff knew of the defective and dangerous sidewalk, and where it was located, he was required to use more care than if he had not such knowledge, and if he neglected to do so, and such neglect contributed to the injury, he cannot recover; but if he did use more than he would be required to do in case he had no such knowledge, and was injured by reason of defendant's neglect, and no fault of plaintiff contributed to the injury, you should find for the plaintiff." It is contended that this instruction is erroneous, because under the evidence in the case the jury should have been instructed that the burden of proof was on the plaintiff to establish the fact that he by his own act did not contribute to the injury. Such is not the law.

Instruction 15 given by the court was devoted to advising the jury of the different elements of damages which they might consider if they found for the plaintiff, and contained this language: "You should allow not only for damages already passed, but for all damages which would naturally and reasonably result from the injury, whether in the past or future." Complaint is made to the last part of the instruction, because it is alleged that the testimony was that, if the plaintiff wore a truss that would fit and kept it adjusted, no danger or inability to work would result from the injury. It is true that in the testimony of two physicians they gave it as their opinion that a truss, properly fitted and kept adjusted, would avoid any inability to work; but one of these physicians fitted the truss which the plaintiff wore on account of a rupture which he claims to have sustained by reason of the injury complained of, and the plaintiff's testimony was to the effect that after he had sustained the injury and while wearing the truss, if he undertook to perform manual labor, such labor would cause pain near the injured part, and he would be obliged to desist and rest; but pain would follow any exertion on his part, and, in our view of the case, it would certainly have been erroneous not to have submitted to the jury the question suggested by the instruction complained of.

In this instruction the court also said to the jury: "You should find from the evidence how much money plaintiff would reasonably have been able and reasonably expected to earn if he had not been injured as alleged, and how much he was and is and will be able to earn with his reduced capacity resulting from such injury, and the difference between these two amounts will be the measure of this element of his damages." Counsel insist that there is no evidence in the record as to the amount of money, if any, plaintiff made before his alleged injury, nor is there anything in the record as to the amount of money that he made afterwards, and that the portion of the instruction just quoted is erroneous for that reason. It is true that

the evidence is not very satisfactory on that branch of the case. There is, however, in the record evidence of what it cost the plaintiff to live, and from which the jury might reasonably infer that he earned at least that amount, prior to the time of his injury, out of his business. There is also evidence that his business had fallen off at least one-half since the injury, and that he had been unable to give his business such attention as it deserved since that time, and we think it can hardly be said that there is such an absolute failure of proof on that branch of the case as to make the giving of this part of the instruction erroneous.

Instruction 17 is as follows: "You are instructed that the burden of proof is upon the plaintiff, and he must satisfy you by a preponderance of all the material allegations of his petition, and if you find that the evidence is evenly balanced, or if it preponderates in favor of the defendant, then your verdict should be for the defendant." It is said that the instruction is erroneous, because the court, evidently through an inadvertence, omitted the words "of all the evidence" after the word "preponderance" in the second line of the instruction. The instruction, however, should be considered as a whole, and when so considered the purpose and meaning of the instruction could not be misunderstood. By the following paragraph the jury were instructed as to the meaning of the term, "the preponderance of the evidence," concerning which instruction there is no complaint. We think upon the whole, that the case was fairly submitted to the jury by the instructions.

As to the complaint that the verdict and judgment are contrary to law and excessive, it is sufficient to say that the evidence, in our mind, is such as to justify the submission of the case to the jury. The question of whether the negligence of the plaintiff was the proximate cause of the injury was a question of fact to be submitted to the jury, and, while a contrary verdict on the evidence would doubtless have been sustained, the court is not justified in invading the province of the jury and overturning its

Dodd v. Kemnitz.

verdict, because the court might differ in its conclusions of fact.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

FRANK H. DODD ET AL. V. JOHN KEMNITZ.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 13,917.

1. **Oral Evidence: WRITTEN CONTRACT.** The admission of oral evidence to explain the possession of and to prove that the delivery of a written contract was conditional, and that such delivery was not to become effective until the happening of some other event, is not a violation of the rule which would prohibit the introduction of oral evidence to contradict or vary the terms of the contract.
2. **Contract: POSSESSION: PRESUMPTION.** The possession of a written contract is *prima facie* evidence of its delivery, but the presumption of delivery arising from such possession may be explained or rebutted by oral evidence.

ERROR to the district court for Dodge county: CONRAD HOLLENBECK, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

Henry M. Kidder, for plaintiffs in error.

H. O. Maynard and George L. Loomis, contra.

JACKSON, C.

The plaintiffs sued the defendant in the district court for Dodge county on a written contract for the purchase of one set of International Cyclopædia. The contract was signed John Kemnitz, Director. In the petition the plain-

tiff set out the execution and delivery of the contract, the approval by the plaintiffs; that the books were shipped as directed; that they had performed all the conditions of the contract on their part to be performed; that the defendant had failed to accept, take and pay for the books, and prayed judgment for the amount of the purchase price. The defendant admitted the execution of the contract, but alleged that it had never been delivered; also alleged that the books were being purchased for a school district, of which he was director of the board; that the contract was conditionally delivered upon an agreement that it should not become effective until approved by other members of the school board; that it had never been approved, and for that reason he had refused to accept and pay for the books. It was proved without contradiction at the trial that the books were ordered by the defendant for the school district, as set out in his answer; that the defendant signed the contract and placed it in the hands of plaintiff's agent, under an oral agreement that if the contract was approved by another member of the board it should become effective, otherwise that it should not, and that the other member of the board referred to did not approve of the contract. At the close of the evidence the court directed a verdict for the defendant, and the plaintiffs prosecute error.

Several assignments of error are presented and discussed by counsel for plaintiffs. The only one, however, that it seems necessary to notice is the claim that the admission of oral evidence to prove the conditional delivery is a violation of the rule which prohibits the admission of oral evidence to vary or contradict the terms of a written contract, because if the trial court was correct in admitting oral evidence for the purpose stated, and the delivery was in fact conditional, and such condition had never been performed, the plaintiffs could not recover in any event, and all errors, if any, were without prejudice. It is the claim of plaintiffs that their possession of the contract in suit, the defendant having voluntarily placed it

in their possession, conclusively shows a delivery for all purposes. With that contention we do not agree. In *Gandy v. Estate of Bissell*, 72 Neb. 356, Mr. Justice SEDGWICK, who delivered the opinion of the court, clearly demonstrates that the possession of a written agreement is *prima facie* evidence only of a delivery. This is in accord with the general rule. The delivery of a written instrument is one of intention, and to constitute a complete delivery thereof it must be made in a manner evincing an intention to part presently and unconditionally with all control over it, and thereby give it effect. *Streissguth v. Kroll*, 86 Minn. 325, 90 N. W. 577. A contract may be delivered subject to an oral condition or agreement that it shall not take effect until a future time, or until something else has been done that the parties have agreed upon, and in such case the instrument will have no operation until the condition or agreement has been performed, even if the delivery is made to the other party himself, and the giving of effect to the oral agreement or condition does not infringe the rule against admitting oral evidence to vary or contradict a written agreement. Story, *Promissory Notes* (7th ed.), note to sec. 56. As already stated, the evidence discloses without dispute that the delivery of the contract in suit was conditional, and that the condition imposed had never been met.

It is clear that the judgment of the district court was right, and we recommend that it be affirmed.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

GEORGE HORNUNG, APPELLÉE, v. O. A. HERRING ET AL.,
APPELLANTS.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 13,926.

Injunction: REPEATED TRESPASS. A court of equity will interfere by injunction to restrain repeated acts of trespass, such as the forcible entry of a dwelling-house by breaking or removing locks from the doors, the forcible removal of fastenings from gates, and assaults upon those in possession; and in such case it is unnecessary to prove that the trespassing parties are insolvent.

APPEAL from the district court for Lancaster county:
EDWARD P. HOLMES, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

George A. Adams and G. W. Berge, for appellants.

G. E. Hager, contra.

JACKSON, C.

The plaintiff obtained a permanent injunction in the district court for Lancaster county, restraining the defendants from entering upon or trespassing on a tract of farm land in that county, and from entering or attempting to enter the residence of the plaintiff on the premises, and from interfering with the plaintiff in his occupation thereof. The defendants appeal.

In an amended petition plaintiff claimed possession and the right of possession under a written lease from Emma Simon, the owner of the land; that he entered into the possession thereof on the 13th day of February, 1904; that the land was inclosed by a barbed wire fence, and that on the land were several small buildings, including a dwelling-house where the plaintiff lived; that on the 1st day of March, 1904, the defendants forcibly and unlawfully entered upon the premises and commenced to farm the land; that the plaintiff forbade them to enter and ordered them to vacate and leave the premises, but the defendants violently and unlawfully assaulted the

plaintiff, his agents and servants, and unlawfully and forcibly broke open the doors to the dwelling-house occupied by the plaintiff and placed some of their own goods in the house, and forcibly tried to put the plaintiff off of the premises and out of the possession of the same, and out of the dwelling-house; and threatened the plaintiff with bodily harm. That again, on the 2d day of March, the defendants came to the premises, and, after being forbidden by the plaintiff to enter thereon, the defendants forcibly assaulted the plaintiff, his agents and servants, and broke open the gate and entered the premises; that they used vile, profane and indecent language, and threatened to do great bodily harm to the plaintiff, his agents and servants; and that they proposed to farm the land, and that they would come each day and take like possession of the premises. Plaintiff further alleged, unless the defendants were restrained by the court, they would continue to forcibly and unlawfully enter the premises and do great and irreparable injury to the plaintiff. Attached to the petition was a copy of a written lease of the premises from March 1, 1904, to March 1, 1905. The defendants answered, claiming that the defendant O. A. Herring was the owner of the premises by virtue of a written contract with Emma Simon, entered into on the 27th day of November, 1903, wherein Emma Simon agreed to sell and convey to Herring the land in controversy for the sum of \$5,600, to be paid, \$500 on March 1, 1904, and \$500 on the 1st day of March of each year thereafter until the 1st day of March, 1909, when the balance remaining unpaid was to be paid in full; that by the terms of the contract defendant Herring was to have possession of the premises on March 1, 1904; and alleged a tender of the sum of \$500 to meet the payment due on March 1, 1904; that the contract was filed and recorded in the office of the register of deeds of Lancaster county on the 16th day of January, 1904; that the said Emma Simon refused to accept the payment tendered by said defendant; that he had kept and performed on his part all of the conditions and provisions

Hornung v. Herring.

of the contract, and was still willing to perform the same. They denied that the plaintiff was in possession of the premises, and alleged that he lived with his grandmother on a farm about a mile distant from the land in dispute; further alleged that on the 1st day of March, 1904, they went to the premises with a load of furniture and placed the same in the house, and commenced farming the land; that they remained in possession for the period of two days, and during all that time neither the plaintiff nor any member of his family were living on the premises. They further alleged that the lease to the plaintiff was executed and received by him with knowledge of the defendants' rights, and that the plaintiff took no right thereunder. There was a trial to the court upon affidavits and oral evidence, and a finding and judgment for the plaintiff, as above stated.

The appellants insist that the evidence is not sufficient under the law to sustain a judgment. It would serve no useful purpose to quote from the testimony at length. There is competent evidence in the record tending to establish these facts: That on the 16th day of February, 1904, the plaintiff moved household goods into the dwelling-house on the land in dispute, repaired the barn on the premises, and hauled and stored there feed for his horses; that on the 1st day of March, 1904, while the plaintiff was temporarily absent from the premises, and while the premises were in charge of his brother, the defendant O. A. Herring entered upon the farm and demanded possession, which was refused; that he forcibly took off the locks and fastenings from the door of the dwelling-house and from the gate, and placed other locks thereon; and that upon the plaintiff's return he undertook to persuade the defendants to leave, and notified them to leave, and that they did leave; that on the following day the defendants again appeared while the plaintiff was preparing his breakfast in the dwelling-house; that the plaintiff forbade them entering upon the premises; that they forcibly opened the gate and threatened to assault the plaintiff, stating that

Hornung v. Herring.

they proposed to come each day and take possession of and farm the land. This defendant also served a written notice on the plaintiff to vacate the premises. The evidence produced on behalf of the defendants tended to contradict in some respects the evidence of the plaintiff and his witnesses. Upon a careful consideration, however, of all of the evidence, we are satisfied that, in the main, the facts are as claimed by the plaintiff.

It is also contended that, because the evidence does not disclose that the defendants are insolvent, the injunction should not have been allowed. In *Pohlman v. Evangelical Lutheran Trinity Church*, 60 Neb. 364, it was held:

"The destruction of a fence, and threatened repetition thereof by a trespasser as often as the fence should be replaced, entitles the owner to relief by injunction against the invader, even though the latter may not be insolvent."

The rule in that case is applicable to the case now under consideration.

A court of equity will interfere to restrain repeated acts of trespass, because the remedy by action at law is not adequate, as it would require the injured party to bring such an action every time the injury was repeated. *Shaffer v. Stull*, 32 Neb. 94.

We are satisfied that the judgment of the district court was right, and recommend that it be affirmed.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

STATE OF NEBRASKA, EX REL. WILLIAM A. SAUNDERS, v.
ROBERT O. FINK, TREASURER.

FILED OCTOBER 5, 1905. No. 14,310.

1. **Statutes: CONSTRUCTION.** In construing a statute, an imperative rule is that effect, if possible, must be given to every clause and part of the statute.
2. **Tax Sale Certificate, Sale of.** Section 26, chapter 75, laws of 1903, construed, and *held* not to authorize the sale of tax sale certificates owned by the state, or by any county or city, for less than the amount due thereon, and that the amount due thereon is to be determined by adding to the face of the certificate interest computed at the rate provided in section 27 of the act.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: ALEX-
C. TROUP, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

W. A. Saunders and Wharton, Adams & Morgan, for
plaintiff in error.

W. W. Slabaugh, John P. Breen, W. H. Herdman and
A. G. Ellick, *contra.*

JACKSON, C.

In a proceeding by the county of Douglas under chapter 75, laws of 1903 (popularly known as the "Scavenger Law"), the city of Omaha, on the 24th day of March, 1905, purchased lots 15 and 16 of J. E. Riley's Subdivision, an addition to the city of Omaha, the bid of the city on lot 15 being \$80.80, and on lot 16 \$100. By the decree under which the property was sold it was determined that the tax on lot 15 amounted to \$80.80, and on lot 16 to \$315.34. The county treasurer issued certificates to the city of Omaha according to the provisions of section 22 of the act under consideration, the certificate covering lot 15 being numbered 5,095, and the one covering lot 16 numbered 3,898. Proceeding under section 32 of the act the county treasurer, respondent herein, in the month of April,

1905, caused notice to be published of the sale required by him to be held, commencing on the first Monday of May, and included in the notice the certificates issued to the city of Omaha, as above recited. The property not having been redeemed prior to the sale, the relator bid at the sale for tax sale certificate No. 5,095, covering lot 15, the sum of \$75, and for tax sale certificate No. 3,898, covering lot 16, the sum of \$90, and at the same time offered to pay all unpaid subsequent taxes on both lots. There were no other bidders for either of these certificates, unless the city of Omaha was a bidder, concerning which we will determine later in this opinion. The respondent refused to accept the bid of the relator, and thereupon the relator applied to the district court for Douglas county for a writ of mandamus to compel the respondent to accept his bid and assign the two tax sale certificates in dispute to him.

In the petition the relator set out in full all of the proceedings of the county of Douglas leading up to the sale of the two lots described, the sale of these lots to the city of Omaha, and the issuance of the certificates therefor, the publication of the notice in April, 1905, and his bid for the two tax sale certificates, and alleged: "That there were no other bidders for either of said certificates, except the city of Omaha pretended to bid the sum of \$80.80 for certificate No. 5,095, and to bid the sum of \$100 for certificate No. 3,898; that the relator at the time of making said bid tendered cash therefor and offered to pay all taxes not covered by the certificates on the real estate covered by the certificates, and demanded that said bids be accepted and the certificates assigned to him; that the county treasurer, in violation of law, refused and declined to accept the bid of the relator, or to assign the certificates to him, but pretended to accept the bid of the city of Omaha, although the city of Omaha did not offer to pay cash therefor; that the certificates are still in the possession of the respondent; that the relator was the highest and best bidder at the sale, and the only one that offered to pay cash for said certificates." He also chal-

lenged the right of the city to bid on the tax certificates, and the right of the respondent to accept the bid of the city, and alleged that he had no interest in the property except such as he acquired by reason of his bids. To the petition the respondent demurred. The demurrer was sustained by the district court, and the writ refused, and, the relator electing to stand upon his petition, the case was dismissed. The relator appeals.

The contention of the relator is: First, that the city of Omaha could not become a bidder at the sale for the tax certificates in question, and, second, that, as he was the only bidder at the sale, his bid should have been accepted and the certificates assigned to him. The respondent contends that, as the bid of the relator did not cover the amount due on the certificates, he was not authorized to accept the bid, and for that reason the writ was properly denied. The questions thus presented call for a construction of the provisions of section 26 of the act under which the proceedings were had. This section is as follows: "Any person desiring to purchase any certificate of tax sale owned by the state or by any county or city, either at public or private sale, may secure an assignment thereof by paying to the county treasurer the amount due thereon, as well as all subsequent taxes and assessments on the property then delinquent, provided, a premium sale may be purchased at public sale for less than the amount of the decree and such sale shall be subject to the provisions of section twenty-three. Such assignment shall be made by indorsement of the county treasurer in his official capacity, countersigned by the county clerk. A record shall be kept of such assignments by the county treasurer and the county clerk. The effect of such assignment shall be to vest in the assignee the same rights which would have been secured to such assignee had he been the original purchaser at the sale." The term "premium sale" as used in this act applies to such sales as are made for less than the amount of the decree.

In the consideration of the case it does not seem impor-

tant to inquire into the right of the city of Omaha to become a bidder at the sale of the tax certificates, unless the respondent is mistaken as to the rights of the relator, because, if the contention of the respondent is correct, it was unnecessary for the city to become a bidder at the sale in order to protect its rights. We shall therefore first determine as to the contention of the respondent. In the construction of a statute an imperative rule is that effect, if possible, must be given to every clause and part of the statute. *Franklin v. Kelley*, 2 Neb. 79; *McCann v. McLennan*, 2 Neb. 286; *Union P. R. Co. v. Burlington & M. R. R. Co.*, 19 Neb. 386; *State v. Babcock*, 21 Neb. 599; *State v. Bartley*, 39 Neb. 353; *McIntosh v. Johnson*, 51 Neb. 33. In the construction, therefore, of section 26, authorizing any person to purchase tax certificates of tax sale owned by the state or by any county or city, effect should be given to that part of the section preceding the proviso, as well as the proviso itself, and the two parts should be harmonized, if possible, so that neither will be violated, because, if it may be said that there is an apparent contradiction, it is the duty of the court, if a reasonable construction can be found which avoids such contradiction, to adopt such construction. *Franklin v. Kelley*, 2 Neb. 79. If, therefore, the proviso may be construed to give it force without changing or modifying the plain meaning of what precedes, then such construction should be adopted. By that part of the section preceding the proviso, the relator was authorized to purchase the tax sale certificates at either public or private sale, by paying the amount *due thereon*, and all subsequent taxes. Evidently "the amount due thereon" was the face of the certificates, with interest, as provided by section 27 of the act, and, keeping in view the meaning of the term "premium sale," it becomes evident at once that the amount due on the certificates might differ materially from the amount due on the decree, as it did in this case. With that distinction in mind, the right of the relator may readily be determined by giving effect to every clause and part of the section under consid-

eration. He had the right to purchase at the sale tax certificates in dispute for the amount due thereon, although that amount might be less than the amount of the decree. To hold that he had any other or greater right would be to indulge in conjecture as to the object which the legislature had in view, and no such conjecture of the object is permissible, unless such object can be clearly ascertained from the language of the statute. *Nebraska R. Co. v. Van Dusen*, 6 Neb. 160. It seems clear that the respondent was right in declining the bid of the relator, and in refusing to assign the certificates upon such bid.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

STATE OF NEBRASKA, EX REL. JOHN C. PENTZER ET AL., RELATORS, V. ROBERT MALONE ET AL., RESPONDENTS; JOHN R. BENNETT ET AL., INTERVENERS.

FILED OCTOBER 19, 1905. No. 14,326.

ORIGINAL application for a writ of mandamus to compel respondents to meet and canvass returns of election. *Writ allowed.*

Stewart & Munger and R. J. Greene, for relators.

Tibbets & Anderson, for respondents.

E. C. Strode and A. G. Greenlee, for interveners.

PER CURIAM.

Peremptory writ of mandamus allowed as prayed by in-

terveners. Writ not to issue until the further order of the court. Opinion to be filed later.

The following opinion was filed November 11, 1905:

1. **Statutes: VALIDITY.** Conceding the provisions of sections 12 and 13 of the amendatory act of the legislature (laws 1905, ch. 76) relating to the election of police judge to be invalid, which is not determined, the remainder of such act would not be affected thereby. Such provisions, it is held, were not an inducement to the passage of the remainder.
2. ———: ———. The provision found in said act (sec. 12) for an election of city aldermen on the first Tuesday in June, 1905, is not special legislation inhibited by the constitution, because applicable to the one city only which at such time comes under the operation of the law.
3. ———: **ENFORCEMENT.** Invalid provisions of an act, not operating to avoid the whole, cannot be relied on to excuse the performance of a duty enjoined by the valid portions of the act.

HOLCOMB, C. J.

The interveners pray for a peremptory writ of mandamus to compel the respondents to meet and canvass the votes cast for city alderman at an election held in the city of Lincoln on the first Tuesday of June, 1905, and to declare the result of such canvass. The respondents seek to justify their refusal to canvass such vote, so cast, on the ground that the law providing for such an election is invalid. The election was held under the provisions of an amendatory act of the last legislature, the same being laws 1905, chapter 16, entitled "An act to amend sections 9, 12, 13, 15, 21, 33, 34, 63, 76, 97, 115, subdivisions 1, 8, 14 and 26 of section 129, all of chapter 13, article I, of the Compiled Statutes of Nebraska, 1903, entitled 'An act to incorporate cities of the first class having a population of more than forty thousand and less than one hundred thousand inhabitants; to define, regulate and prescribe their organization, duties, liabilities, powers and government, and to repeal article I of chapter 13a of the Compiled Statutes of 1889, and to repeal the sections so

amended, and to declare an emergency.'” Section 12 of the amendatory act provides: “The general city elections in cities governed by the provisions of this act shall be held on the first Tuesday in April in the year 1905, and on the first Tuesday in May every two years thereafter. Provided, however, that a special city election shall be held on the first Tuesday in June, 1905, for the purpose of electing seven city aldermen as provided by this act. At all general and special city elections held under the provisions of this act the polls shall be opened in each election district at such places as may be designated by the mayor, or fixed by the ordinance, and shall be kept open between the hours of eight o'clock A. M. and seven o'clock P. M. and no longer. Provided further, that all incumbents in office, including the seven councilmen, whose terms of office under operation of existing law expire in the year 1906, shall be privileged to continue in office until the general city election to be held in the year 1907.”

1. It is contended by respondents, in justification of their course, that the law is invalid because it operates to extend the term of the police judge for a period of one year contrary to the constitutional provision concerning that office, which fixes the term thereof at two years. It is said that a police judge has been elected in the city of Lincoln in the even numbered years for many years past. It is the law, as settled by several adjudications, that a police judge is a constitutional officer whose term is fixed by that instrument at two years, and that it is not competent for the legislature to extend or abridge the term as thus fixed in the paramount law. It is also held that these provisions of the constitution are self-executing, and that an election to the office of police judge at a general election at the expiration of the term of the incumbent vests in the successful candidate a perfect title to the office, and that such elections shall be had at a general election as specified in the constitution, rather than at the time of holding city elections as may be provided by statute at a time different than that when the general

elections are held. *State v. Stuht*, 52 Neb. 209; *State v. Moores*, 70 Neb. 48, 57; *State v. Nolan*, 71 Neb. 136. Assuming then, without deciding the question, that the provisions of the section under consideration relating to the election of police judge is void because conflicting with the constitution, it by no means follows that the entire amendatory act must fall. In fact it at once becomes apparent that these provisions with reference to the election of a police judge are wholly foreign to the act, and their elimination in no way affects the remainder, nor interferes in the least with the legislative purpose in its passage of the law, or in its execution. The act is yet complete in all its parts, and the invalid part, if it be invalid, is quite separable from the remainder, which is in nowise dependent thereon, nor does it appear that the invalid part is such as to warrant the belief that the legislature would not have acted had it not been incorporated in the act. *State v. Stuht*, *supra*; *Trumble v. Trumble*, 37 Neb. 340; *State v. Moore*, 48 Neb. 870.

2. It is also contended that the provisions of section 12 for an election of aldermen on the first Tuesday of June, 1905, is special legislation inimical to the constitution relating to that subject, which inhibits special legislation or local laws regarding the specified subjects therein enumerated, and in all cases where a general law can be made applicable. Const., art. III, sec. 15. The argument is built on the theory that there can be but one such election, and that it applies only to one city, the city of Lincoln, and that the court will take judicial cognizance of the fact that but the one city can ever come under its provisions; that is, that at the special election provided for in June for city aldermen, Lincoln will be the only city participating in such election or that ever will participate therein, and that it therefore applies especially to Lincoln and can never apply to any other city, whatever may be their growth in the future. This may be granted, and yet the conclusion contended for does not follow. The classification of cities according to population, even though but one

city may come under the provisions of the act at the time of its adoption, is permissible under an unbroken line of decisions in this jurisdiction, beginning with *State v. Graham*, 16 Neb. 74. The general classification, then, being in harmony with the fundamental law, can it be successfully contended that the provision for the first election to be held in April or in June contravenes that instrument? The election provided for in April, 1905, would be equally special legislation as that to be held in June. In either case there can be but the one election and it can apply to but the one city. These are simply temporary provisions incorporated for the purpose of putting a law, general in its scope and effect, and admittedly constitutional in its main objects and purposes, into operation and effect. It is for the purpose of effecting a transformation from the old to the new order of things. In this respect a general law, such as contended for, cannot be made applicable. The constitution, it will be observed, recognizes that all laws and all provisions of a law cannot be made general in their operation. The authorities cited by counsel for respondent from Illinois and Minnesota (*Devine v. Board of Commissioners*, 84 Ill. 590, and *Thomas v. City of St. Cloud*, 90 Minn. 477, 97 N. W. 125), are not in point. In each case cited the law was condemned as a whole because applicable for all time to but one city or county. The language of each of the acts held invalid was such that at no future time could any municipality, even though having attained the required population, enjoy the benefits of any of its provisions. In other words, there was no classification of cities generally, but only an act, special in its nature, applying for all time to but the one city or county then in existence of the required population. *State v. Scott*, 70 Neb. 685, recently decided by this court is analogous in principle to the cases last decided. In the case at bar the act applies to all cities now or hereafter having the population therein specified. This, as we have seen, does not infringe on the constitutional inhibition against special legislation. The provisions for the first

elections under the amendatory act to be held in April and June are incidental to the main objects of the law, and do not, because they become obsolete after such elections and therefore applicable only to the city, render the act special legislation within the meaning of the term as used in the fundamental law. In many statutes, we doubt not, will be found provisions of a temporary character which, when they have served their purpose, become of no further use, and which, if consideration be had of them, standing alone and as independent legislation, would be special or local in their nature, scope and effect. Indeed, in the section as it stood before the present amendment, and in the section following, will be found provisions equally objectionable as the one under consideration, and yet we have never heard of them being questioned on the ground of being special legislation inimical to the constitution.

3. It is further argued that the amendatory act in question cannot be upheld because of matters not germane to the original section found in section 13, as amended. It is insisted that the provision therein found which says: "The mayor shall be *ex officio* president of said council, and shall preside at the meetings thereof, and shall appoint the standing committees of said council, and in the event of a tie vote shall cast the deciding vote. Provided, however, that the council shall have the power to elect a president *pro tempore*, who shall preside over the meeting of a council in the absence of the mayor and who shall exercise the powers of the mayor on his absence from the city" is in violation of the rule now well established in this jurisdiction to the effect that, where the title to a bill is to amend a particular section or sections, no amendatory legislation not germane to the subject matter of the original section proposed to be changed is permissible. *Armstrong v. Mayer*, 60 Neb. 423; *State v. Bowen*, 54 Neb. 211. The original section provided for the election of city officers, including the mayor and a city council, and fixed the terms of their respective offices. The subject embraced in the section, and to which it relates, was in part the formation

of the city council. The amended section making the mayor the presiding officer of that body and to that extent an ex officio member appears clearly, as it appears to us, germane to the subject of legislation embraced in the section before amended. Each relates to the composition of the body denominated the city council. It would also seem that the provision giving the mayor the deciding vote in the event of a tie is not so foreign to the subject matter embraced in the section as to render the same invalid. The mayor is not made a member of that body in the fullest sense of the word. His membership is limited to certain purposes, that is, presiding over the deliberations of the council, and casting the deciding vote in the event of an evenly divided vote by the members of the body proper. It is our duty to uphold the law, unless it is clearly and beyond reasonable doubt in conflict with the fundamental law. If a reasonable doubt exists, it must be solved in favor of the validity of the statute. Whenever a legislative act can be so construed as to avoid a conflict with the constitution and give it the force of law it will be so construed, although such construction may not be the most obvious and natural one. *State v. Poynter*, 59 Neb. 417; *State v. Smith*, 35 Neb. 13. Whether, however, the added powers which are conferred on the mayor in the section amended are germane to the subject matter of the original section we need not here determine. If not so, the statute would only yield to the extent of the repugnancy, and no further. The respondents could not avail themselves of such invalid portions of the section. Conceding them to be such, it can hardly be said that it is apparent from the act itself that these provisions, if treated as invalid, were such an inducement to the passage of the act as to avoid the whole. The legislature will be presumed to have intended to act within its constitutional limitations, and if it has exceeded its powers the provisions in excess thereof only will be declared inoperative, except it be apparent that the rejected part was an inducement to the adoption of the remainder.

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It is also argued that these provisions conferring certain powers on the mayor and providing for the selection of a temporary presiding officer are amendatory of other sections of the act not referred to, or set out in the amended sections, and for that reason the section must go down, and with it the whole amendatory act. If these provisions be not germane to the original section amended, which we do not decide, then they alone would, as we have seen, be held invalid; and if they are germane, then, we are satisfied that they are not amendatory of other sections as contended for in the constitutional sense, wherein it is declared that "no law shall be amended unless the new act contain the section or sections so amended and the section or sections so amended shall be repealed." *De France v. Harmer*, 66 Neb. 14.

We find nothing in the act, the validity of which is challenged, requiring us to condemn it in its entirety or to declare the law as a whole void, nor that would excuse the respondents from discharging the duty imposed upon them by law to canvass the vote cast at the election for aldermen; and a writ of mandamus is accordingly ordered issued as prayed.

WRIT ALLOWED.

STATE OF NEBRASKA, EX REL. C. B. HENSLEY, RELATOR, v.
JAMES PLASTERS, CLERK, RESPONDENT.

FILED OCTOBER 19, 1905. No. 14,468.

ORIGINAL application for a writ of mandamus to compel respondent to file certificate of nomination and place name of relator on election ballot. *Writ allowed.*

E. N. Kauffman and *M. B. Davis*, for relator.

S. D. Killen, *Samuel Rinaker*, *Norris Brown*, Attorney General, *W. T. Thompson* and *R. S. Bibb*, for respondent.

Fawcett & Abbott, amici curiæ.

PER CURIAM.

Writ of mandamus allowed. Opinion to be filed later.

BARNES, J., *dissents.*

The following opinion was filed December 6, 1905:

1. **Officers: LEGISLATIVE POWER.** The legislature cannot appoint county officers, nor by an act solely for that purpose extend the terms of such officers.
2. **Constitutional Law.** Chapter 47 of the laws of 1905 is unconstitutional and void.

SEDGWICK, J.

The last legislature enacted what was known as the biennial election law, the purpose of which was to dispense with annual elections and to provide for the holding of a general election on each alternate year. The act in express terms provided for the filling of many offices by election in the year 1906, which elections would otherwise have been held in the year 1905. The office of register of deeds was expressly included in this provision. The statute was held to be unconstitutional in *State v. Galusha, ante*, p. 188. There were also several independent acts of the legislature making precisely the same provisions for various different offices, among them being chapter 47, laws 1905, which provides for the office of register of deeds. This chapter purports to amend section 77a, article I, chapter 18, Compiled Statutes, 1903. This section was originally enacted in 1887, amended in 1889, and as so amended it provided that "at the general election in the year 1889, and every four years thereafter, a register of deeds shall be elected in and for each county having a population of eighteen thousand and three (18,003) inhabitants or more, to be ascertained by the census of 1885, and each state and national census there-

after," etc. It contains at length provisions in regard to the fees of the register of deeds, varying in different counties according to the number of inhabitants of the county. The only change made by the act of 1905 in question was the insertion of 1906 instead of 1889, so that the section should read: "At the general election in the year 1906, and every four years thereafter," etc. By the act of 1887 the office was created, and it was provided that the election should be held at the general election of that year, and every two years thereafter, so that the next election of the register of deeds would take place in the year 1889, which was not changed by the act of 1889. The term, however, by the latter act was extended four years, and, by its provision that a register of deeds should be elected every four years thereafter, the election of the register of deeds would take place in 1905. If, then, this act of 1905 is valid, the effect would be to prevent the holding of an election for register of deeds in 1905, and to provide for the election of that officer in 1906, thereby extending the term of the officers now holding for the period of one year. The county clerk of Gage county refused to file the certificate of nomination of the relator as a candidate for the office of register of deeds, and refused to cause his name to be printed upon the official ballot as such candidate, to be voted for at the election of 1905, and these proceedings were brought to obtain a writ of mandamus to compel him to do so. If the act in question is valid, the county clerk was right in his refusal, as there could be no election of register of deeds in the year 1905.

1. In the argument the constitutionality of the act was attacked upon several grounds. It was insisted that the sole purpose of this legislation was to provide for biennial elections; that this act was a part of the scheme of the legislature mainly set forth in the more comprehensive act above referred to, but supplemented by several acts that manifestly had no purpose, except to assist in the general object to do away with annual elections. From

this premise it was argued that this act was unconstitutional, because the inducement for its enactment has failed with the failure of the more comprehensive act. To this it was objected that the court is never at liberty to look to one act of the legislature for the inducement to another act. If the court could know that the sole inducement to the act was to assist in carrying out the provisions of a general act of the legislature, enacted at the same time, that has been found to be unconstitutional and void, it would, of course, hold this act unconstitutional also. The argument is that the court cannot know this to be the case, but, on the other hand, must presume that the legislature had some sufficient motive in enacting a law which is complete in itself. This seems to us somewhat like a relic of the earlier days, when courts continually presumed things to exist which they knew did not exist. We do not find it necessary to pass upon this curious question, since the statute must be held invalid for another reason.

2. Another objection urged against the constitutionality of the act was that the legislature has no power to extend the terms of the present incumbents of the office of register of deeds by such legislation. The office is not mentioned in the constitution. It is a creature of the statute, and there can, of course, be no doubt that the power that created the office may abolish it, or may change it, including the lengthening of the term of the office itself. There is no doubt of the validity of the act of 1889, the sole and manifest purpose of which was to extend the length of the term from two years to four years; and, likewise, there can be no doubt that the term might be again reduced by the legislature to two years, or that the office might be abolished entirely and its duties imposed upon other officers. *County of Douglas v. Timme*, 32 Neb, 272. Again, there can be no doubt that the legislature, after it has established an office, or in the act of establishing it, may provide for filling the office either by election by the people or, in a proper case, by appoint-

ment by some designated authority. The legislature, however, cannot itself fill the office. It cannot elect or appoint the officer. Const., art. V, sec. 10; *State v. Stanley*, 66 N. Car. 59, 8 Am. Rep. 488; *State v. Holcomb*, 46 Neb. 88. And it seems to us to follow that it cannot by direct legislation for that sole purpose cause an office to be held for the term, or any period of the term, by any particular individual. The supreme court of California in *Christy v. Board of Supervisors*, 39 Cal. 3, held, as stated in the syllabus:

"But when office has been filled by an election, the legislature may extend the term of the incumbent; provided the whole term, when extended, does not exceed the time limited by the constitution."

The court said in the opinion:

"If we had any doubt on this point, we should be very reluctant to arrive at a different conclusion, in view of the serious complications which might arise, growing out of past legislation on this subject. The legislature has so often exercised, unquestioned, the power to prolong the terms of the incumbents of elective officers, that it might result in the most embarrassing perplexities, if all these acts, at this late day, were pronounced to be void. They have repeatedly extended terms of supervisors, tax collectors, assessors and all county officers. (Citing many acts of their legislature.) Nothing but an imperious sense of duty, founded on the plainest principles of constitutional construction, would justify us in holding all these acts to be void after this lapse of time."

To our minds the reason for their holding set forth in this quotation is more satisfactory than the other reasons which the court attempted to give. It does not appear from the opinion that their constitution contains an equivalent of our provision in section 13, article XVI, to the effect that elective officers must be elected "at the general election next preceding the time of the termination of their respective terms of office." We find no suggestion in their opinion as to what force or meaning

should be given to such a constitutional provision. They say:

"The people select the incumbent of the *office*, but the legislature has the power to define the duration of the term."

That is, the people by election shall designate the person who shall hold the office, and the legislature shall then provide for how long a time he shall hold. Again they say:

"It cannot be denied that he was *elected* to the *office*, and that he would not be the incumbent of it, except for his election. The people have exercised their constitutional right in selecting him for the office," etc.

Such language as this does not satisfy our idea of the meaning and force of our constitutional provision. We think the idea of our constitution is that the people shall choose a man to fit the established term, and not that the legislature shall establish a term to fit the man who has been chosen. In the argument it was stated by counsel for the respondent that the inducement to this legislation was not to assist in carrying out the general idea of the more comprehensive biennial law, but the sole object of this legislation was to extend the term of the various registers of deeds for one year; that is, by an act for that sole purpose, the legislature has declared that A, who is now occupying the office of register of deeds and whose term for which the people elected him will expire in January next, shall hold that office for another year. This is nothing else than providing by legislative enactment who shall be register of deeds in the respective counties of the state from January, 1906, to January, 1907. This, we think, the legislature cannot do. On the other hand it is plainly provided by that part of the constitution above quoted that the legislature shall provide for an election so that, before the current term of elective officers expires, the people may select the incumbent for the succeeding term. The view of the California court makes no distinction between the term of office itself and the tenure

of that office during that term by the incumbent; between the official house and the individual who occupies it. The legislature establishes the office, and the people provide the incumbent. So that attempted legislation, which has for its sole purpose to determine who shall be the incumbent of the office for another definite period of time, is infringing upon the rights of the people, and is void.

Counsel for respondent cited *People v. Loeffler*, 175 Ill. 585, and *Crook v. People*, 106 Ill. 237, but these authorities do not support their contention. In the first named case it was said:

"When an office is created by a statute, it is wholly within the control of the legislature creating it. The length of term and mode of appointment may be altered at pleasure, and the office may be abolished and the compensation taken away from the incumbent, unless forbidden by the constitution."

These propositions are not controverted. They do not involve the question of the right of the legislature to select the incumbent of an office. In 1872 the legislature of Illinois enacted a general incorporation law, and provided that cities already incorporated might, upon a vote of the people at an election held for that purpose, become incorporated under this general act. The city of Springfield was incorporated under a special act, and afterwards on the 4th day of April, 1882, held an election, at which it was voted to become incorporated under the general act. The general act of incorporation provided that "the city officers then in office shall thereupon exercise the powers conferred upon like officers in this act until their successors shall be elected and qualified." It was contended that the vote of the people repealed the special charter, and that that repeal abrogated all the offices of the city and determined the tenure of all the officers who held under the repealed act. The supreme court held in *Crook v. People*, 106 Ill. 237, that the vote of the people did abrogate the special charter of the city, but that the general incorporation act continued the officers that were

in office at the time of the vote for the purpose of calling an election to elect officers under the general incorporation act, and that this was not such an extension of the terms of those officers as to be in violation of the constitution. It does not appear that the terms of the officers were extended beyond the time for which they were elected by the people, and moreover the authority given these officers to hold over for a specific purpose was incidental and necessary to the incorporation of the city under the general law. We do not find it necessary to determine in this case whether such special and incidental holding over for a short period would be in violation of our constitution. It was contended by both parties upon the argument that the act that we are now considering was enacted for the sole purpose of extending the tenure of the office another year; one party contending that this was the ultimate purpose of the legislation; the other party contending that this purpose was only incidental to the general scheme to provide for biennial elections.

The conclusion that we have reached in this case is amply sustained in the reasoning of the court of appeals of New York in *People v. Bull*, 46 N. Y. 57, 7 Am. Rep. 302. The legislature of New York created a new judicial district in the city of New York, called the eighth judicial district, and directed the time for the election of a justice of the district court for that district. The time designated was "at the next general election which took place in the same year." It was directed that the justice should be elected the same as the justices of the district court in that city, and that he should hold his office for the term of six years from January 1, 1861. Under that law the defendant was elected to the office. Afterwards the legislature enacted that "the term of office of the justice * * * of the district court for the eighth judicial district, in the city of New York, is hereby extended and continued to and including the 31st day of December, 1869, so that the term of office of said justice * * * shall expire when the term of office of the present justices * * *

of the other district courts expire by law." The court of appeals held that this act was unconstitutional; that it was beyond the power of the legislature to extend the term of the incumbent. The opinion, which was delivered by Mr. Justice Folger, is an exhaustive and unanswerable discussion of the point involved. In the course of the discussion the eminent jurist said:

"If the legislature can, by extending the term of such an office, continue in it the holder thereof for one year, it may for any number of years; and thus the duration of the term thereof may be perpetuated by legislative power; and the people, after one exercise of the constitutional power of choosing certain of their own officers, be ever after that deprived of it. So the legislature may as well from time to time, at the expiration of a term, whether the elective term, or the legislative extended term approaches, again and again extend it, and continue in office an incumbent distasteful to his legitimate constituency. Thus would the theory of the government be subverted, and its practice be prevented. The government is the expressed will of a majority of the people, limited by constitutional restrictions. The practice is, that such will shall be expressed, at frequently returning periods. * * * It (the constitution) at the same time gives the legislature power to declare the duration of the office. But doing that, it means no more than that, be the time what it may, and altered in duration when it may, the incumbent shall be the creature of the people. And thus it guards against a majority of the legislature, adverse in sentiment to a majority of the people of a locality, placing or continuing over them in official power, one whom they would not select. * * * It will not be claimed, that the legislature could have passed an act, appointing to the office for a term of three years, after the expiration of the defendant's elective term of six years, any person whom it might in the act name. Nor will it be claimed, that it could have passed an act, appointing the defendant to the office by his proper name for

that term of three years. That all will concede to be a violation of the constitution. But is not the violation the same, to continue him in the office by his official name for that time by legislative act? The authority under which he must act for the term is the same in both cases. He would find it not in the voice of the people, but only in the act of the legislature."

The whole opinion is worthy of careful study, and sets forth sufficient reasons for the conclusion which we have reached in this case. It is true the language of their constitution was that all such judicial officers as may be created therein (in cities and villages) by law shall be elected at such time and in such manner as the legislature may direct. This provision does not affect the argument as applied to the case at bar. The reasoning of the New York court, which we approve, is to the effect that continuing an officer in office beyond his term is equivalent to an appointment for the time he is so continued in office. The legislature cannot appoint registers of deeds, and therefore it cannot by an act for that sole purpose continue such officer in office for a definite period beyond the expiration of the term for which he was elected. It is not necessary to discuss the effect of section 13, article XVI of our constitution above referred to.

Again, it was said by the same court in 1896:

"Where the office is to be filled by one authority and the duration of the term is to be determined by another, the declaration of such duration must go before the filling, so that each authority may have its legitimate exercise." *People v. Foley*, 148 N. Y. 677, 43 N. E. 171. It was held in that case that: "The legislature cannot extend the term of a town officer after his election, since that would virtually be an appointment to the office during the period of extension." There were other matters presented upon the argument, but their discussion would be of no permanent value, and we think the foregoing are sufficient reasons for our conclusion in allowing the peremptory writ.

WRIT ALLOWED.

BARNES, J., dissenting.

I am unable to concur in the opinion of my associates. I think no one will dispute the correctness of the statement that "the legislature cannot appoint county officers, nor by an act solely for that purpose extend the terms of such officers." But whether that rule applies to the facts of this case is quite another question. It appears that in the year 1887 the legislature passed an act creating the office of register of deeds, and fixing the term thereof at two years; that at the legislative session of 1889 that act was amended, and the term of office was fixed at four years by the provision that the register of deeds shall be elected "at the general election in the year 1889, and every four years thereafter." The validity of these acts has never been questioned, and the majority opinion concedes that they were a proper exercise of legislative power, because the office in question is not a constitutional one, but is purely a creature of the legislature. And it is fairly stated by the majority that in such cases that body may fix the term of office, the compensation of the incumbent, the time of his election, and may change the duration of the term, or abolish the office altogether, if it be deemed expedient to do so. The legislature at its session of 1905 again amended the act, and changed the time of the election to fill the office, which would have occurred in the present year, to the general election of 1906, by an act which reads in part as follows: "At the general election in the year 1906, and every four years thereafter, a register of deeds shall be elected in and for each county having a population of * * * 18,003 inhabitants or more." Nothing appears in the title to the act, or in its provisions, which would render it invalid or unconstitutional, and on its face it seems to be a valid exercise of legislative power.

At the hearing it was contended by the relator that the act was a part of a legislative plan to provide for biennial instead of annual elections, and, the main act having

failed, the act under fire must also fail. It was found necessary, however, to abandon that proposition, for the rule, that constitutional and unobjectionable provisions in a legislative act may be declared invalid only applies where it is manifest that the unconstitutional features of the act constituted the main inducement for its passage, is so well established that its soundness cannot be questioned. The question of illegal or unconstitutional inducements does not seem to have been extended to separate or independent acts, constitutional in and of themselves.

Counsel for the relator also asserted that the sole purpose of the legislature in passing the act was to fill the office for the year commencing on the first Thursday after the first Tuesday of January, 1906, and ending at a corresponding time in the year 1907, by extending the term of the incumbents, and thus usurp the powers of the qualified voters of the state and deprive them of their constitutional right to elect such officers. As I understood the discussion, the above statement of counsel for the relator was strenuously denied by the attorney general and other able counsel who appeared with him on behalf of the people in support of the validity of the act. It is but fair, however, to say that the attorney who appeared as private counsel for the respondents, for the purpose of argument only, admitted the assertion, and contended that, even if that fact existed, it would not render the act invalid. In support of his contention he cited *Christy v. Board of Supervisors*, 39 Cal. 3, which is disapproved by the majority opinion. This, no doubt, is what led to the statement contained in that opinion that "it was contended by both parties upon the argument that the act we are now considering was enacted for the sole purpose of extending the tenure of the office another year," and to the conclusion announced by my associates. As I recollect it, the law department of the state made no such contention or admission; and I am of opinion that private counsel for the respondent had no right or power to bind either the people or the members of the legislature by a

statement of that kind, and thus invalidate a legislative act which, but for such admission, must have been held to be a valid exercise of legislative power.

The conclusion that a majority of the members of the legislature were influenced by 13 incumbents of the office of register of deeds to pass a law for the sole purpose of keeping them in office for a year is so absurd that I am unable to give it serious consideration. The majority, however, base their opinion on that conclusion, and support it by the case of *People v. Bull*, 46 N. Y. 57, 7 Am. Rep. 302, where the dangers of legislative usurpation are discussed at length and with great ability. I am inclined to believe that the rule there announced has no application to the instant case, for several reasons: First. The office there in question was a constitutional one, and the decision could have been properly justified on the grounds stated in *State v. Galusha*, ante, p. 188. Second. The constitution of New York, under which that decision was rendered, differs from the constitution of Nebraska in an important and decisive particular. Our constitution says that the legislature shall provide for the election of such county and township officers as may be necessary, and contains no further restriction. The whole matter, except that the officers are to be elected and not appointed, is left to the discretion of the legislature. The term may be dealt with as the legislature pleases. The New York constitution required that the legislature should provide not only for the election, but also for the time and manner of election, of such officers. The Nebraska constitution goes no further than to require that the officers be elective, while the New York constitution required the legislature also to fix the term. The constitution of California is very like that of this state; hence it was held in *Christy v. Board of Supervisors*, supra, that an act of the legislature extending the term of a legislative office was constitutional. Third. The legislature of the state of New York is to some extent a continuing body. Senators are elected in that state for a term of four years, under an

arrangement by which one-fourth of their number goes out of office each year. So it would only be necessary, in order to secure permanency of objectionable legislation, to elect a few of the members of the assembly pledged to that purpose, and it would be accomplished. In our state, however, the members of the legislature are all elected biennially, and may be held to immediate and strict accountability to their constituents. So usurpation of unlawful power by our legislature can never occur.

Speaking for myself, I see no danger of legislative usurpation, for it does not appear to me that, by the passage of the act in controversy, any such usurpation was either contemplated, attempted, or accomplished. In determining the question involved in this case, we should be mindful of the rule that a legislative intent to violate the constitution is never to be assumed, if the language of the statute can be satisfied by a contrary construction. *New York & O. M. R. Co. v. Van Horn*, 57 N. Y. 473; *French v. Teschemaker*, 24 Cal. 518; *Attorney General v. City of Eau Claire*, 37 Wis. 400; *Brown v. Buzan*, 24 Ind. 194; Endlich, *Interpretation of Statutes*, sec. 178; *People v. McElroy*, 72 Mich. 446, 2 L. R. A. 609.

In *City of New Orleans v. Robira*, 42 La. Ann. 1,098, 11 L. R. A. 141, it was said: "The acts of the legislature are to be treated with great respect, as they emanate from a coordinate and powerful branch of the government. They must be presumed to be constitutional, unless they can be shown manifestly to have transgressed or violated the organic law."

Judge Cooley in his work on *Constitutional Limitations* (7th ed., ch. 7, par. IV), page 236, says: "The protection against unwise or oppressive legislation, within constitutional bounds, is by an appeal to the justice and patriotism of the representatives of the people. If this fail, the people in their sovereign capacity can correct the evil, but courts cannot assume their rights. The judiciary can only arrest the execution of a statute when it conflicts with the constitution. It cannot run a race of opinions

upon points of right, reason, and expediency with the law-making power. Any legislative act which does not encroach upon the powers apportioned to the other departments of the government, being *prima facie* valid, must be enforced, unless restrictions upon the legislative authority can be pointed out in the constitution, and the case shown to come within them."

So, in safeguarding the rights of the people against legislative usurpation, we should have a care lest we trespass upon the domain of a coordinate and independent department of state government. Again, all acts and parts of acts bearing on a particular subject should be construed together, harmonized, if possible, and given such a construction, if it can be done, as to render all of them constitutional. The foregoing rules have had our approval in one form or another in *Bradshaw v. City of Omaha*, 1 Neb. 16; *In re Creighton*, 12 Neb. 280; *Hallenbeck v. Hahn*, 2 Neb. 377; *State v. Smith*, 35 Neb. 13; *State v. Poynter*, 59 Neb. 417; *State v. Stewart*, 52 Neb. 243; *Muldoon v. Levi*, 25 Neb. 457; *State v. Farmers & Merchants Irrigation Co.*, 59 Neb. 1; *State v. Stuht*, 52 Neb. 209.

Notwithstanding these rules, it is announced by the majority that the act in question violates the provisions of section 13, article XVI of the constitution, because by its terms the legislature has appointed persons to fill the office of register of deeds for the ensuing year, and deprived the people of their right to elect such officers. In this conclusion I cannot concur. An examination of the register of deeds acts discloses that the legislature has never, in direct language, fixed the term of that office. That matter, however, is incidentally included in the words, "in the year 1889, and every four years thereafter."

No section of the constitution prohibits the legislature from extending the term of office, where the office is created by legislative act. Now, if the section above mentioned is construed in such a way as to prevent the extension of the term of a legislative office, on the ground

that the extension of such term is filling the office by legislative appointment, then sections 101, 103, 104 and 107 of chapter 26, Compiled Statutes, 1903, are unconstitutional, because they define how vacancies in office may be created, provide for filling such vacancies, and declare that "every officer elected or appointed for a fixed term shall hold office until his successor is elected, or appointed and qualified, unless the statute under which he is elected or appointed expressly declares the contrary." If we may be permitted to look beyond the terms of the act in question and ascertain the purpose of the legislature in passing it, then the several acts passed by that body at its last session relating to the subject of elections conclusively show that the purpose was to provide for biennial elections, which was surely a commendable one, and the act in question is at least one step toward its consummation. I think it stands to reason that the legislature, fearing the main act might not be sufficient to change the election of registers of deeds from the odd to the even numbered years, adopted the act which is the subject of this controversy. Now it must be conceded that this act, in connection with section 104 of the chapter above mentioned, operates incidentally to extend the term of the incumbents until their successors shall be elected at the general election of 1906, and thereafter qualified, as provided by law. That this does not render the act invalid seems to be settled by the great weight of authority in this country. The time of holding over of these officers is as much a part of their term of office as that which preceded it. *State v. Moores*, 61 Neb. 9; *Pruitt v. Squires*, 64 Kan. 855, 68 Pac. 643; *State v. Menaugh*, 151 Ind. 260, 43 L. R. A. 408; *State v. Tallman*, 24 Wash. 426, 64 Pac. 759; *Commonwealth v. Hanley*, 9 Pa. St. 513; *Gosman v. State*, 106 Ind. 203, 6 N. E. 349; *State v. Howe*, 25 Ohio St. 588; *State v. Lusk*, 18 Mo. 333; *People v. Lord*, 9 Mich. 226. It was said in *State v. Tallman*, *supra*:

"When, therefore, the legislature used the words, 'whose

term of office shall begin on the second Monday in January next succeeding his election and continue for two years and until his successor is elected and qualified,' it was not meant thereby that his term of office should be two years and no more. The phrase, 'and until his successor is elected and qualified,' means something. It was not used idly. If so, the term was not fixed at two years and no more, but was two years and more; the further time depending upon the contingency not only of an election, but also of the qualification of the person elected, which might be one day, one month, or any number of months."

The effect of the sections of chapter 26, above mentioned, is to provide that, if the election of any officer fail, by reason of the ineligibility of the person elected, by failure to hold an election, the postponement of such election by legislative act, or a failure to elect for any other reason, there shall be no vacancy in the office, and the incumbent shall hold over until the next general election at which his successor can be chosen. Those sections were enacted to provide for contingencies like the one which arises in this case; and it seems to me that it cannot be said that the legislature, by passing an act which incidentally creates such a contingency, has appointed any particular person or persons to fill the office. The office is already filled by the voters. They have filled it by electing the person of their choice, and by operation of law such person continues to hold the office until he can be legally reelected, or another chosen to take his place. This view not only accords with the authorities last above cited, but with many other decisions of the courts of last resort of nearly all of our sister states.

It seems to me that the effect of the majority opinion is to restrict the power of the legislature to deal with offices of its own creation; to overthrow or, to say the least, disregard the provisions of section 104, chapter 26, Compiled Statutes, 1903, to violate the usual canons of constitutional and statutory construction, and substitute the opin-

ion of the court for that of the legislature as to matters of legislative policy. I therefore respectfully dissent from the conclusion of my associates. I am of opinion that the act in question is constitutional, and that the writ should have been denied.

STATE OF NEBRASKA, EX REL. LAWRENCE M. WELSH, RELATOR, V. ARTHUR V. OFFILL, COUNTY CLERK, RESPONDENT.

FILED OCTOBER 19, 1905. No. 14,477.

ORIGINAL application for a writ of mandamus to compel respondent to file certificate of nomination and place name of relator on election ballot. *Writ allowed.*

H. M. Sinclair, for relator.

Norris Brown, Attorney General, *W. T. Thompson* and *Edwin E. Squires*, for respondent.

Fawcett & Abbott, amici curiæ.

PER CURIAM.

Writ of mandamus allowed. Opinion to be filed later.

BARNES, J., dissents.

The following opinion was filed December 6, 1905:

SEDGWICK, J.

This is an original application for a writ of mandamus against the county clerk of Buffalo county, and the questions presented upon the record are in all respects identical with those presented in *State v. Plasters*, ante, p. 652.

For the reasons given in that case, a peremptory writ of mandamus was allowed.

BARNES, J., dissenting.

I dissent for the reasons stated in my opinion in *State v. Plasters*, ante, p. 652.

STATE OF NEBRASKA, EX REL. PORTER DONNELL, RELATOR, v.
ARTHUR V. OFFILL, COUNTY CLERK, RESPONDENT.

FILED OCTOBER 19, 1905. No. 14,478.

ORIGINAL application for a writ of mandamus to compel respondent to file certificate of nomination and place name of relator on election ballot. *Writ allowed.*

H. M. Sinclair, for relator.

Norris Brown, Attorney General, *W. T. Thompson* and *Edwin E. Squires*, for respondent.

Fawcett & Abbott, amici curiæ.

PER CURIAM.

Writ of mandamus allowed. Opinion to be filed later.

BARNES, J., dissents.

The following opinion was filed December 6, 1905:

SEDGWICK, J.

This is an original application for a mandamus against the county clerk of Buffalo county to compel him to receive and file the nomination of relator to the office of supervisor for the sixth district of said county. The county clerk refused to receive and file the certificate upon the sole ground that there could be no election of supervisor at the ensuing election, because section 1, chapter 54, laws of 1905, provides: "The supervisors selected and ap-

pointed as provided in this act shall hold their respective offices until the next general election occurring upon the even year following their selections or appointment, and until their successors have been duly elected and qualified." This act of the legislature would extend the terms of the county supervisors of the state for another year, and was held to be in conflict with the constitution for the reasons given in *State v. Plasters, ante*, p. 652.

Other objections were made to the constitutionality of the act, but it is not thought that their discussion here would be of permanent value.

The peremptory writ was allowed as prayed.

BARNES, J., dissenting.

I dissent for the reasons given in *State v. Plasters, ante*, p. 652.

ALBERT BLACKER V. STATE OF NEBRASKA.

FILED OCTOBER 19, 1905. No. 14,148.

1. **Criminal Law: EVIDENCE.** One cannot be convicted of a felony upon his own unsupported extrajudicial confession that a crime has been committed. Such confession may be sufficient to prove the defendant's connection with the criminal act, but there must in all cases be proof *aliunde* of the essential facts constituting the crime. *Sullivan v. State*, 58 Neb. 796.
2. Evidence examined, and found insufficient to support the verdict of guilty and the sentence pronounced thereon.

ERROR to the district court for Keya Paha county: WILLIAM H. WESTOVER, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

W. S. Hedrick and W. C. Brown, for plaintiff in error.

Norris Brown, Attorney General, and W. T. Thompson, *contra.*

HOLCOMB, C. J.

The defendant (plaintiff in error) was charged and convicted of the crime of uttering a false, fraudulent and forged instrument. The forged instrument alleged to have been uttered by the accused was a warranty deed, purporting to convey title to certain lands situated in Keya Paha county. The verdict of guilty rests almost entirely, if not exclusively, on an alleged written confession of the accused while under arrest and waiting trial for the crime charged. The writing was sworn to by the accused, and was a narration of purported facts as to how the accused and others perpetrated the forgery of the deed, the uttering of which was charged in the information. The court instructed the jury: If you believe from the evidence beyond a reasonable doubt that the crime of uttering a forged deed was committed as charged, "and you further believe from the evidence beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant made the confession given in evidence in this case, you should treat and consider such confession precisely as you would any other evidence or testimony; and if the jury believe said confession to be true, then you should act on it accordingly. The confession offered in evidence is competent evidence for you to consider in determining the guilt or innocence of the defendant in this case." No other instruction regarding the alleged confession was given, nor were any requested by counsel for the accused. That the accused signed and made oath to the written confession is established beyond peradventure of doubt, and there is nothing in the record to discredit its truthfulness. There was, however, a very serious controversy concerning the manner in which the confession was procured, and whether it was freely and voluntarily made, and there was introduced more or less testimony of a conflicting character on that point. It was the theory of the defense, to support which there is competent evidence in the record, that the affidavit termed a confession was procured to be made for the purpose of securing the extradi-

tion of an alleged accomplice in the forgery of the deed, with the view of having the prosecuting witness compensated for the financial loss he had sustained because of the void deed which he had obtained from the accused, and the dismissal of the prosecution. There is evidence tending to prove that it was represented to the accused that, by making the affidavit, requisition papers could be procured for the alleged accomplice, and he would, before being brought to this state to answer to the crime charged, make good the financial loss sustained by the prosecuting witness, and that, thereupon, the prosecution of the crime charged would be terminated, and the accused thus regain his liberty. Whether the question of the confession being the free and voluntary act of the accused, which was a mooted one, should not have been submitted to the jury, under suitable instructions, as a question of fact, we need not here determine, since it is not raised by the record. What has been said regarding this phase of the case is for the purpose of more clearly presenting the error relied on for a reversal of the judgment of conviction.

It is earnestly contended in briefs of counsel for defendant that there is no evidence of the *corpus delicti* aside from the alleged confession, and that the confession alone is insufficient to support the verdict of guilty found by the jury. It seems to be a well settled rule in almost if not all the states of the Union that an extrajudicial confession will not be received as conclusive plenary evidence, and that there must be also proof of the *corpus delicti*. 1 Elliott, Evidence, sec. 292, and other authorities cited. This court has recently said that "one cannot be convicted of a felony upon his own unsupported extrajudicial confession that a crime has been committed. Such confession may be sufficient to prove the defendant's connection with the criminal act, but there must in all cases be proof *aliunde* of the essential facts constituting the crime." It is also said that, "while a voluntary confession is insufficient, standing alone, to prove that a crime has been committed, it is competent evidence of that fact, and may,

with slight corroborative circumstances, be sufficient to warrant a conviction." *Sullivan v. State*, 58 Neb. 796. See also *Davis v. State*, 51 Neb. 301; *Priest v. State*, 10 Neb. 393; and *Dodge v. People*, 4 Neb. 220.

It is modestly contended by the state that there is found in the record, in addition to the confession, slight corroborating circumstances of the commission of the crime charged, and sufficient to bring the case within the rule announced in *Sullivan v. State*, *supra*; and to support the judgment of conviction. A careful perusal of the evidence contained in the bill of exceptions has failed to satisfy us that there is any competent evidence of the essential elements of the crime charged, aside from the written confession. It is true there is some evidence to prove that the deed was inadequate to convey title to the grantee, the prosecuting witness, but this does not prove nor tend to prove that the instrument delivered to him by the defendant was a forgery. We fail to find anything in the testimony given by the prosecuting witness to prove his title failed because the deed of conveyance, which the accused was charged with uttering, was a forgery. He says he lost the land because of a forged title. The record in a civil action, in which the question of title, and the force and effect of the deed alleged to have been forged, and regarding which the accused was charged with uttering, were involved, was introduced without objection as evidence in the case, but subsequent to its introduction, on the objection and motion of counsel for the accused, this item of the evidence was all stricken out for all purposes, except as evidence that the prosecuting witness had been divested of his title to the land. This, of course, left nothing in the way of evidence, from which it might be inferred that the deed was a forged instrument, or that the loss of title was the result of a forged deed, with the uttering of which the defendant was charged in the information on which he was being prosecuted. We can find nowhere evidence independent of the written confession from which the deduction is at all warrantable that the deed he was

State v. Vinsonhaler.

charged with feloniously uttering was in fact a forged instrument. There is on this point an utter failure of proof, the confession alone excepted, hence we are driven to the conclusion that the evidence is insufficient to sustain a conviction, and that the judgment complained of must be reversed and the cause remanded for a new trial, which is accordingly ordered.

REVERSED.

STATE OF NEBRASKA, EX REL. W. W. SLABAUGH, COUNTY ATTORNEY, RELATOR, V. DUNCAN M. VINSONHALER, COUNTY JUDGE, RESPONDENT.

FILED OCTOBER 19, 1905. No. 14,446.

1. **Taxation: INHERITANCES.** The tax provided for in the inheritance tax law, so called (laws 1901, ch. 54, as amended, laws 1905, ch. 117), is not a property tax, but upon the right of succession to property by inheritance or will.
2. ———: **LEGISLATIVE POWER.** The enumeration of subjects of taxation in section 1, article IX of the constitution, is not exclusive. The legislature has power to provide for taxation upon inheritances.
3. **Inheritance Tax Law: CONSTRUCTION.** The act does not require the tax to be levied upon the property constituting the whole estate of the decedent, but upon the share that each heir or devisee takes therein.

ORIGINAL application for a writ of mandamus to compel respondent to appoint appraiser under inheritance tax law. *Writ allowed.*

W. W. Slabaugh and Charles E. Foster, for relator.

George E. Pritchett, for respondent.

Crofoot & Scott, amici curiæ.

SEDGWICK, J.

The respondent as county judge of Douglas county refused to appoint an appraiser in the matter of the estate of

Frank Murphy, deceased, pursuant to the inheritance tax law. Comp. St. 1905, ch. 77, art. VIII, sec. 11; Ann. St. 10716. This is an application for a writ of mandamus to compel the appointment of such appraiser. The defense is that the law is unconstitutional.

1. The first question presented is whether the tax provided for in this legislation is a tax on property. Section 1, article IX of the constitution, requires that taxes on property must be levied by valuation, and the tax exacted from each person and corporation must be in proportion to the valuation of the property taxed. The act in question provides for a varying rate of taxation, depending upon the degree of relationship of the heir or devisee, and upon the amount received from the estate by him. If therefore the tax in question is to be regarded as a tax upon property, the legislation cannot be upheld. It appears to be almost uniformly held that, if the tax is laid upon the amount received from the estate by the heir or devisee, it is a tax upon the right of succession to property, that is, upon the right to receive the property from the estate of the decedent, and not upon the estate itself. *Magoun v. Illinois Trust & Savings Bank*, 170 U. S. 283, 18 Sup. Ct. Rep. 594.

2. Indeed, this appears to be conceded by the respondent, and the principal argument is upon the following question involved in the construction of section 1, article IX of the constitution. That section is as follows: "The legislature shall provide such revenue as may be needful, by levying a tax by valuation, so that every person and corporation shall pay a tax in proportion to the value of his, her or its property and franchises the value to be ascertained in such manner as the legislature shall direct, and it shall have power to tax peddlers, auctioneers, brokers, hawkers, commission merchants, showmen, jugglers, innkeepers, liquor dealers, toll bridges, ferries, insurance, telegraph and express interests or business, venders of patents, in such manner as it shall direct by general law, uniform as to the class upon which it operates." It is

said in the brief of the respondent: "The right of succession to property by will or inheritance is not among the subjects of taxation named in the constitution, and, therefore, the legislature had not the authority to provide for taxing it. The legislature is restricted by this section of the constitution in its power of taxation, and to the objects and things therein named." The federal constitution is a grant of power to the federal government, but the state constitutions are restrictions upon the general power of legislatures. *State v. Nelson*, 34 Neb. 162; *Hanscom v. City of Omaha*, 11 Neb. 37; *Magneau v. City of Fremont*, 30 Neb. 843. It is insisted that the section of the constitution under consideration must be construed to limit the taxing power of the legislature to the subjects named therein. It is urged with great force, and it must be admitted with some reason, that the language of the section itself requires such construction. The command of the constitution is that the legislature shall provide needful revenue, and this command is followed immediately by a provision as to how such revenue shall be provided, to wit: "By levying a tax by valuation, so that every person and corporation shall pay a tax in proportion to the value of his, her or its property and franchises." Then follows an enumeration of subjects of taxation upon which the legislature may lay taxes "in such manner as it shall direct by general law." These exceptions are introduced by the words "and it shall have power." These words, it is urged, show the manifest intention of the constitution to deny the power to the legislature of taxing any other subjects than those named in the constitution. The legislature must provide needful revenue. It must do this by valuation, except that it shall have power to tax some specified subjects by another method. To this reasoning it is answered that the legislature must necessarily determine the meaning of doubtful provisions of the constitution defining or limiting its power. That, when a provision of the constitution is susceptible of a construction that will justify the

legislation attacked, the legislature will be presumed to have adopted that construction, and its action will be upheld. It is also answered that the matter has been determined by prior decisions of this court. In *State v. Lancaster County*, 4 Neb. 537, it is said in the third paragraph of the syllabus:

"The maxim, *expressio unius est exclusio alterius*, does not apply in the construction of constitutional provisions regulating the taxing power of the legislature." And in the opinion section 1 of article IX is quoted, and it is said: "It is therefore contended on the part of the relator that by this section the taxing power of the legislature is limited to the objects and classes of business enumerated, and that as the tax required to be paid on the commencement of suits, is not included in any one of the classes thus enumerated, the act imposing such tax is inconsistent with the constitution and void. * * * The theory of construction, advanced on the part of the relator, assumes that this power is limited by implication, upon the principle, *expressio unius est exclusio alterius*; but does this rule apply to the taxing power of the legislature? I think not. And as no positive restriction is imposed on the exercise of this power in respect to other matters, not included in the objects and classes enumerated, I think the rule is that the framers of the constitution relied for protection in this regard upon the wisdom and justice of the representative body and the accountability of its members to the people, rather than the restraining power of the courts of law."

Upon the argument the writer of this opinion was impressed with the view that the point so discussed and so plainly determined in *State v. Lancaster County*, *supra*, was not in fact necessary to a determination of that case. It seemed that the requiring of a commencement fee to be paid in actions brought in this court was not in the nature of providing public revenues, but rather an attempt to require litigants to pay at least a portion of the expense that they caused the state in particular litigation, and that

therefore it might be supposed that the restrictions of the constitution regulating the manner of providing needful revenues would not apply. If the case were unsupported by subsequent decisions there might still be reason to doubt its controlling power here. In *State v. Ream*, 16 Neb. 681, it was said:

"In *State v. Lancaster County*, 4 Neb. 537, this court held that the enumeration in the constitution of certain subjects for taxation did not preclude the legislature from imposing other taxes where there was no prohibition," thus recognizing the authority of that case upon this proposition. And in *Magneau v. City of Fremont*, 30 Neb. 843, it is said:

"It has been the uniform holding of this court that the constitution is not a grant, but a restriction of legislative power, and that the legislature may legislate upon any subject not inhibited by the constitution."

And in support of this proposition *State v. Lancaster County*, *supra*, and *State v. Ream*, *supra*, are both cited, with numerous other decisions of this court. Again, in *State v. Lansing*, 46 Neb. 514, it is said: "Therefore, in such cases as the present, the maxim '*expressio unius est exclusio alterius*' is not applicable, and the legislature may adopt any provision not prohibited by the constitution," citing also *State v. Lancaster County*, and *State v. Ream*, *supra*.

Also, Mr. Commissioner RYAN in his dissenting opinion in *State v. Moores*, 55 Neb. 480, 523, quoted the foregoing language from the opinion in *Magneau v. City of Fremont*, *supra*, and cited the same decisions of this court in support thereof. This construction of the section of the constitution in question is not entirely without reason to support it. The legislature has evidently construed this section as it was construed in the cases above referred to. It is a general rule that, if a phrase or section of the constitution will admit of different constructions, that construction given it by the legislature must so far prevail as to uphold the legislation if possible, and, without investi-

Alpersen v. Whalen.

gating the matter as an original question, in view of the construction given to this section by the legislature, we feel constrained to follow *State v. Lancaster County, supra*, which has so long been recognized as authority by this court. Upon this view this legislation is not prohibited by the constitution.

3. It was urged upon the argument that the part of the section of the statute under consideration beginning with the words, "in all other cases," in some instances requires the tax to be levied upon the whole estate of the decedent, and so, is a tax upon property, and, not being uniform, is therefore unconstitutional. For the purposes of this taxation, estates seem to be classified according to their value, but it does not follow that the tax is placed upon the property constituting the gross estate of the decedent. The tax is placed upon the estate received by each heir, or devisee, and its rate is uniform as to each class. It is held in *Magneau v. City of Fremont, supra*, that this classification is reasonable and within the province of the legislature. If some clause or clauses of this part of the section are void for uncertainty (which we of course do not decide), this would not invalidate the entire act. We conclude that the legislation is valid, and the county court should have appointed an appraiser as requested.

The relator is entitled to a peremptory writ as prayed.

WRIT ALLOWED.

JOHN ALPERSON, APPELLEE, v. MICHAEL WHALEN,
APPELLANT.

FILED OCTOBER 19, 1905. No. 14,452.

Statutes: TITLE. Section 11, article III of the constitution, requires the subject of an act of the legislature to be clearly expressed in the title of the act, but this is sufficiently complied with if the subject and purpose of the proposed legislation is manifest from the language of the title. A literal recital in detail of the subject of legislation is not indispensable.

APPEAL from the district court for Douglas county:
GEORGE A. DAY, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

Norris Brown, Attorney General, and W. T. Thompson,
for appellant.

Woolworth & McHugh, contra.

SEDGWICK, J.

The plaintiff Alpersen, being held in custody for the violation of the so-called anti-cigarette law enacted by the last legislature, applied to the district court for Douglas county for a writ of habeas corpus, and upon hearing was discharged from custody. He was charged with unlawfully giving away cigarettes and cigarette paper, and insisted that that part of the act which made giving away of cigarettes and cigarette paper unlawful was unconstitutional, because it was a subject not sufficiently expressed in the title of the act. The provision of the constitution which this part of the statute was supposed to have violated is section 11 of article III: "No bill shall contain more than one subject and the same shall be clearly expressed in its title." It is insisted by the plaintiff that the subject of the legislation in this section is not clearly expressed in the title of the act; that the words "give away or willingly allow to be taken" are not found in the title, and therefore cannot properly be included in the act itself. In the copy of the opinion of the learned trial judge, which we find in the brief, it is said that the object of the constitutional limitation is "to prevent the legislature from passing a law under the guise of one name, which might affect some other interests or rights," and it is contended by counsel that the right to give away cigarettes and cigarette paper cannot be abridged in a law, the title to which does not specify an intention to prohibit a gift; that, as the title mentions only manufacture and sale," the legislation must be limited to the

technical and well-defined meaning of these words, and that gift would constitute a different subject and cannot be held to be included in this title. It was said by the supreme court of Maryland in *Parkinson v. State*, 14 Md. 184, 195: "To find out what the law was intended to prevent, we are at liberty to resort to the body of the law." That is, the first thing to ascertain is the subject of the bill, and then ascertain whether that subject is clearly expressed in the title.

What, then, is the subject of this legislation? The first section of the act provides: "That it shall be unlawful on and after the date this act shall go into effect to manufacture, sell, give away or willingly allow to be taken any cigarettes or the material for their composition known as cigarette paper within the state of Nebraska." Laws 1905, ch. 198. The legislature undoubtedly supposed that the use of cigarettes was injurious to the public in general, through its effects upon the health and morals of the people. Unless there is reason for such supposition the legislation would be unconstitutional as beyond the power of the legislature. That the use of these injurious articles might be discouraged, and the injurious effects thereof upon the public removed as far as possible, it was made unlawful to manufacture, sell, or give away the article itself, and a particular material that is used only in the manufacture of that article. The intention is to remove these articles from the avenues of commerce; to banish them from the state as guilty and illegitimate things that ought not to be offered to, or easy of access by, vicious or thoughtless people who are, or may be, injured thereby. This is the manifest subject of legislation as disclosed in the first section of the act above quoted.

Is this purpose of the legislature sufficiently disclosed in the title of the act? The title is: "A bill for an act to prohibit the manufacture and sale of cigarettes and what is known as cigarette paper and to provide a penalty for its violation and to repeal sections 2363, 2364, 2365 and 2366 of Cobbeys' Annotated Statutes of Nebraska."

The nature and use of these articles is well understood. If the legislature was justifiable in assuming that the character of these articles is such as to justify the prohibition of their manufacture and sale, the court will also take notice of the nature and use of the prohibited articles. With this in mind, can it be said that the subject of this legislation as derived from the act itself is so disguised in the title that the legislators would not be sufficiently notified by the language used in the title that it was intended to discourage the use of the articles referred to, and to that end, to prevent all traffic therein? We think that it is manifest from the title to this act, and therefore sufficiently expressed therein, that it was the purpose of the proposed legislation to protect the people of the state against results arising from furnishing these articles to the public. In *Affholder v. State*, 51 Neb. 91, it was said:

"Section 11, article III of the constitution, should be so liberally construed as to admit of the insertion in a legislative act of all provisions which, though not specifically expressed in the title, are comprehended within the objects and purposes of the act as expressed in its title, and to admit all provisions which are germane, and not foreign, to the provisions of the act as expressed in its title."

The title of the act in question in that case was "An act to provide cheaper text-books, and for district ownership of the same." The provision of the act itself, which it was claimed was unconstitutional as not sufficiently expressed in the title, was as follows: "The provisions of this act shall include all school supplies."

It was contended that school supplies were not included in text-books, and it must be confessed that a stronger case was made against the act there attacked than against the act under consideration here. It was also said in the opinion:

"We do not think the term 'text-books' should be given a technical meaning, but that it is comprehensive enough to and does include globes, maps, charts, pens, ink, paper,

Miles v. State.

etc., and all other apparatus and appliances which are proper to be used in the schools in instructing the youth."

If the barter and gift of cigarettes and cigarette paper are not prohibited by the act, it is manifest that the purpose and intent of the legislature is thwarted, and we think that purpose and intent is plainly to be derived from the title of the act itself.

The judgment of the district court is reversed, and the prisoner John Alperson is remanded to the custody of the officer.

REVERSED.

WILLIAM H. MILES V. STATE OF NEBRASKA.

FILED OCTOBER 19, 1905. No. 14,157.

1. **Injunction: CONTEMPT.** A party is not punishable for contempt of court for disregarding a void order of injunction; but, when an injunction is legally granted in a case where the court has jurisdiction of the subject matter and of the parties, it must be respected until it is set aside by the court allowing it, or is reversed in the appellate court by some appropriate mode of direct review.
2. ———: ———. When one knowingly disobeys an injunction which is not void, he is liable to punishment for contempt, though he would have been entitled to a vacation of the order upon a motion to dissolve or upon a trial of the merits of the bill.
3. **Bill of Exceptions.** Unless a bill of exceptions is authenticated in the manner required by law, the supreme court cannot receive and consider it.
4. **Injunction: CONTEMPT: REVIEW.** Where the evidence introduced on the trial of one charged with a constructive contempt of court for the violation of an order of injunction is not preserved and authenticated by a proper bill of exceptions, the only question which can be considered by the reviewing court is whether the pleadings contained in the transcript support the judgment, and, if they are found sufficient, the judgment will be affirmed.

ERROR to the district court for Frontier county: ROBERT C. ORR, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

E. B. Perry, for plaintiff in error.

Norris Brown, Attorney General, *W. T. Thompson* and *L. H. Cheney*, *contra*.

BARNES, J.

This is a proceeding in error instituted by one William H. Miles to reverse a judgment of the district court for Frontier county by which he was adjudged to be in contempt of that court for the violation of an order of injunction. So far as we can ascertain from the complaint, the facts underlying this controversy are, in substance, as follows: One David C. Ballentine claimed to be the owner and was in possession of a certain tract of land situated in Frontier county adjoining the plaintiff's premises. On the 6th day of December, 1903, Ballentine commenced an action in the district court for Frontier county against the plaintiff, and in that suit obtained a temporary order of injunction, restraining the plaintiff from committing repeated trespasses upon his premises, or, in other words, enjoining a continuing trespass, which it was alleged consisted of driving over the lands of the said Ballentine, cutting down and destroying his fences, and driving cattle and hogs upon the land in controversy therein. While the temporary order of injunction was in force, a complaint in the form of an affidavit was filed, charging the plaintiff with a violation thereof. He was thereupon required to show cause why he should not be adjudged in contempt of court. Issues were made up, and a trial was duly had, which resulted in the judgment complained of. The plaintiff contends that the judgment of the trial court should be reversed because the temporary order of injunction was void. It is true that a void order of injunction will not sustain a judgment for contempt. *Calvert v. State*, 34 Neb. 616; *State v. Graves*, 66 Neb. 17.

It is claimed by counsel that the injunction was void because it transferred the title and the right of possession

of the premises in dispute to Ballentine summarily and without a trial. This contention is beside the mark. The record discloses that the injunction was only a temporary one, by which it was sought to hold matters *in statu quo* pending the litigation between the parties to the suit in which it was allowed. *Calvert v. State, supra*, is the case relied on by counsel for a reversal of the judgment complained of, but it does not sustain his contention. In that case the court said:

"A preliminary injunction is merely to preserve matters *in statu quo* until a hearing. * * * In any case where the court or judge has jurisdiction and grants an injunction during the pendency of a suit, the injunction while in force must be obeyed."

The injunction which was the basis of the proceeding for contempt was, as above stated, merely a temporary order restraining a continuing trespass during the pendency of the action in which it was allowed. That the district court had power to make and enforce such an order cannot be successfully questioned. *Shaffer v. Stull*, 32 Neb. 94; *Peterson v. Hopewell*, 55 Neb. 670; *Pohlman v. Evangelical Lutheran Trinity Church*, 60 Neb. 364; *Sills v. Goodyear*, 80 Mo. App. 128. It was the duty of the plaintiff while the order was in force to obey it. One violating such an order does so at his peril. In *Wilber v. Wooley*, 44 Neb. 739, it was held:

"A party is not punishable for contempt of court for disregarding a void order of injunction; but when an injunction is legally granted in a case where the court has jurisdiction of the subject-matter and of the parties, it must be respected until set aside by the court allowing it, or it is reversed in the appellate court by some appropriate mode of direct review. Where one knowingly disobeys an injunction which is not void, he is liable to punishment for contempt, though he would have been entitled to a vacation of the order upon a motion to dissolve, or upon a trial upon the merits of the bill."

It is further claimed that the evidence does not support

the judgment. An examination of the record discloses that we are not at liberty to examine that question. What purports to be the bill of exceptions, attached to the transcript herein, has never been settled and allowed by the judge before whom the cause was tried. Neither is it settled, allowed or certified to by the clerk of the district court. In fact, it is not authenticated in any manner known to the law. For this reason, as we have frequently held, we cannot consider it. *Hogan v. O'Niel*, 17 Neb. 641; *Edwards v. Kearney*, 13 Neb. 502; *Quick v. Sachsse*, 31 Neb. 312; *Murphy v. Warren*, 55 Neb. 215.

The only question left for our determination is whether the pleadings are sufficient to sustain the judgment. The sufficiency of the complaint, which is in the nature of an affidavit, has not been challenged in any manner by the plaintiff. In fact, it seems to be conceded on this branch of the case that, if the facts stated therein were true, the plaintiff was rightly adjudged to be in contempt of court. This being the case, nothing remains for us to do but to affirm the judgment of the district court, which is accordingly done.

AFFIRMED.

ALBERT W. CRITES V. STATE OF NEBRASKA.

FILED OCTOBER 19, 1905. No. 14,253.

1. **Contempt: REVIEW.** A judgment in a summary proceeding for contempt *in facie curie*, where no complaint is filed, no evidence is taken, and no trial had, may be reviewed on the record made therein without the filing of a motion for a new trial.
2. ———: **PRESUMPTIONS.** Presumptions and intendments will not be indulged in, in order to sustain convictions for contempt of court. *Hawes v. State*, 46 Neb. 149.
3. ———: **RECORD.** The record in such a case must show forth the facts constituting the offense. A mere recital that the defendant is guilty of contemptuous and insolent behavior toward the court, and is in contempt of court, where the record of the proceedings does not warrant such recital, is a mere conclusion, and is insufficient to show that the offense was in fact committed.

ERROR to the district court for Dawes county: JAMES J. HARRINGTON, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

Albert W. Crites, pro se.

Norris Brown, Attorney General, and W. T. Thompson, contra.

BARNES, J.

The plaintiff in error, Albert W. Crites, while engaged as counsel for the defendants in the trial of a civil action in the district court for Dawes county, was summarily and without trial adjudged to be guilty of a contempt of court, alleged to have been committed in the presence of the presiding judge, and he was thereupon sentenced to pay a fine of \$10 and costs, and to stand committed until said fine and costs were paid. A stay of proceedings was denied him, and his request to be permitted to make a showing and a defense in said proceeding was refused, and he was thereupon committed to, and confined in, the common jail of the county until he obtained an order from this court suspending the execution of his said sentence. By a petition in error he now asks for a reversal of the judgment thus pronounced against him.

The state contends, at the outset of this controversy, that we cannot consider the errors assigned by the plaintiff, because no motion for a new trial was filed in the court below. To support this contention the attorney general cites *Zimmerman v. State*, 46 Neb. 13. An examination of that case discloses that Zimmerman was tried and found guilty of a constructive contempt of court for the violation of an injunction order in a civil case. It appears that a complaint was filed therein; that witnesses were examined on the hearing, and a regular trial was had; that on error to this court it was held that the questions arising on the trial were the only ones that must be included in a motion for a new trial. It was said in the opinion:

"There was no motion for new trial filed in this case, hence we cannot review any of the errors assigned which are alleged to have been committed during the trial."

The contempt in that case was committed outside of the presence of the court, and was investigated as any other complaint, where witnesses are examined and a regular trial had. It was said that in such a case a motion for a new trial must be filed, directing the attention of the district court to the errors claimed to have been committed during the trial, but it is fairly inferable from the whole opinion that no motion for a new trial would be necessary to raise the questions presented by the record in a case where no trial was ever had. It appears in the case at bar that the plaintiff was never tried for the alleged contempt; that no evidence was taken; that he was accorded no defense or explanation, and that judgment was thus summarily pronounced against him; and it would seem absurd to hold that a motion for a new trial must have been filed, when there was no trial in the first instance. Again, we have held that no motion for a new trial is necessary in order to review the decision of the district court upon an application for a liquor license and the case at bar is one quite similar in principle. So we have no hesitancy in holding that the questions presented by the record in a case like this may be reviewed without a motion for a new trial.

We come now to consider the plaintiff's contentions. It appears that during the trial of a civil action in the district court for Dawes county, in which one Horace Brockway was plaintiff and Benjamin F. Pitman and others were defendants, and in which Brockway sought to recover a certain sum of money from defendants therein on account of the alleged wrongful conversion of the proceeds of a check, which it was claimed was left with some of the defendants in escrow, and in which the defendant Pitman, among other things, alleged as his defense that he had sold and conveyed his interest in a certain tract of

land situated in Dawes county for the amount of the check in question, and while the said Pitman was testifying in his own behalf, the plaintiff in error, who was conducting the examination, propounded to said Pitman certain questions tending to establish the defense of some of his clients, and while so examining the witness, the judgment complained of was rendered against him. The following is a copy of the findings on which the sentence was pronounced: "The said Albert W. Crites was examining the defendant Benjamin F. Pitman while the said Pitman was on the witness stand as a witness, and in open court, in the presence of the jury, the court advised the said Albert W. Crites not to examine the witness any further in relation to certain matters as shown by the record; that, after the court had advised the said Albert W. Crites not to examine the witness any further as to this particular matter referred to by the court, the said Albert W. Crites, immediately, in strict violation of the order of the court, again asked certain questions in relation to the same matter. Whereupon, the court advised counsel again not to examine any further as to the matter referred to by the court, and that if he did so he might consider himself in contempt of court; that counsel then advised the court in words, or in substance, that he was going to ask another question anyway; that the attorney did then immediately ask another question, which question was in strict violation of the order of the court; and the court, being fully advised in the premises, finds that said Albert W. Crites is guilty of contemptuous and insolent behavior toward the court and is in contempt of court, and that said contempt and the contemptuous and insolent behavior was committed in the presence of the court and while the court was in open session." This was followed by the judgment and commitment above mentioned. Subsequently, the court refused the accused time in which to apply for a writ of error, and adjudged that he be committed to jail, which was accordingly done, where he remained for a little more than twelve hours, and until an

order of supersedeas was obtained from the chief justice of this court. The plaintiff's petition contains numerous assignments of error, but the substance of his contention is that the judgment of the trial court is not sustained by sufficient evidence, or in fact by any evidence; that the findings do not support the judgment, and it was therefore wrongfully pronounced and should be reversed and set aside.

This was a summary proceeding to punish an alleged contempt committed in the presence of the court. No written charge or complaint was filed, which the accused could examine and attack, and no evidence was taken or submitted to establish the charge, which the accused could combat or explain. In such a case it is absolutely necessary for the preservation of the liberties of the citizen that, in recording the conviction, the court shall state the facts showing the contempt charged. It is not sufficient to state in a general way the conclusions of fact on which the conviction is based. The facts themselves must be stated, from which the reviewing court can see that the ultimate fact of guilt is properly and justly found. The findings of the court fail to meet this requirement. The record contains a bill of exceptions setting forth the proceeding in which the plaintiff was adjudged guilty of contempt. This does not aid the findings or supply such facts as should be contained therein. On the contrary, it would seem that the questions propounded by the plaintiff were competent and proper, and well calculated to establish the defense which he had interposed for his clients; and it does not appear that his demeanor to the court was in any way disrespectful, or that his conduct was contumacious or offensive. No intendments or presumptions can be indulged in to sustain the judgment of the trial court in a contempt proceeding. Such a proceeding is criminal in its nature, and the rules governing criminal proceedings are applicable thereto. *Boyd v. State*, 19 Neb. 128; *Beckett v. State*, 49 Neb. 210; *Zimmerman v. State*, *supra*, *Hawes v. State*, 46 Neb. 149. In *Hawthorne v.*

State, 45 Neb. 874, we cited *Batchelder v. Moore*, 42 Cal. 412, and quoted from the opinion therein as follows:

"The power of a court to punish for an alleged contempt of its authority, though undoubted, is in its nature arbitrary, and its exercise is not to be upheld, except under the circumstances and the manner prescribed by law. It is essential to the validity of proceedings in contempt, subjecting a party to a fine and imprisonment, that they show a case in point of jurisdiction within the provisions of the law, by which such proceedings are authorized, for mere presumptions and intendments are not to be indulged in their support."

In *Ogden v. State*, 3 Neb. (Unof.) 886, it was expressly held that the record must show forth the *facts* constituting the offense; that a recital that the accused did address insulting and menacing language to the court is a statement of a mere conclusion; that the language itself must be set out, so that the reviewing court may see that it is contemptuous; and that the record of a conviction of contempt *in facie curiæ* is insufficient, unless it thus shows that the offense was committed.

According to the rule announced above, the record in this case is defective, and does not sustain the judgment complained of.

It follows that the judgment of the district court must be, and it is, therefore,

REVERSED.

NELS T. QUIST V. AMERICAN BONDING & TRUST COMPANY
ET AL.

FILED OCTOBER 19, 1905. No. 13,947.

1. **Liquor License Bond: ACTION: PLEADING.** A petition against a surety upon a liquor license bond that does not allege the granting or issuance of a license does not state a cause of action.
2. **Evidence examined, and held** sufficient to require the submission of the question of conspiracy to the jury.

ERROR to the district court for Dawson county: BRUNO O. HOSTETLER, JUDGE. *Reversed in part.*

H. D. Rhea, for plaintiff in error.

J. B. Strode and Warrington & Stewart, *contra.*

AMES, C.

This is an action to recover damages against retail liquor dealers and the defendant bonding company, as their surety. The petition alleges that in May, 1902, Hutton and Berger were applicants to the board of trustees of the village of Gothenburg for a license to sell liquors for the then ensuing year, and that their application was accompanied by a bond in the form prescribed by the statute, which was executed by them and the surety, and by them delivered to the village authorities. There is no allegation that the bond was accepted by the trustees or that a license was granted or issued, although the petition contains what purports to be a copy of the instrument upon which are indorsements from which, if true, these facts might be inferred. The bonding company filed a separate answer, admitting the execution of the bond and its corporate character and authority to do business in the state, but denying generally every other allegation in the pleading, including, of course, the delivery of the bond and the authenticity of the indorsements. At the beginning of the trial the company objected, separately, that the petition does not state a cause of action against it, and at the conclusion of the trial there was a motion for a peremptory instruction of a verdict in favor of all the defendants, which the court granted, and upon a return of the verdict judgment was entered accordingly. The instrument in question was not offered in evidence, nor was there any proof offered of its delivery to or acceptance by the village authorities or of the granting or issuance of a license. As to the bonding company the instruction and subsequent proceedings were therefore clearly right.

It is not disputed that the defendants Hutton and Berger were engaged during all the then ensuing year in the business of liquor saloon-keepers in the village, and it is alleged in the petition that in April, 1903, while they were so engaged, they entered into a conspiracy with Frank Driscol, George McAully and George Wilkinson unlawfully and wrongfully to assault and beat the plaintiff and that pursuant to said conspiracy, and to the end that the three last named persons might be excited to commit the wrong intended, Hutton and Berger sold and gave them intoxicating liquors, and that while under the influence of said liquors they did commit an assault and battery upon the plaintiff, to recover damages for which this action was brought. It is not disputed that there was a violent and unprovoked assault by the three persons named upon the plaintiff and one George Anderson while the two latter were peacefully walking along the highway. The two were attacked simultaneously, but the plaintiff was struck by Driscol only, while Andrews was assaulted by McAully and Wilkinson. There is evidence that the two latter were seen drinking in the saloon of, and holding whispered conversations with, Hutton and Berger shortly before the commission of the wrongful act, and evidence tending to show that Driscol was intoxicated, and that the motive and object of the conspiracy, if there was one, were to compel the withdrawal of a remonstrance against the granting of a liquor license to Hutton and Berger for the then ensuing year, or to be revenged for the making of such remonstrance. Assuming that there was a conspiracy, Driscol may, if not a party to it, have been its instrument for the perpetration of the wrong complained of, and his principals liable for his conduct. We think these facts are such as required the question of conspiracy between Hutton and Berger and the parties committing the assault to be submitted to the jury, and that the verdict and judgment in their behalf is therefore erroneous.

It is recommended that the judgment as to the Ameri-

can Bonding and Trust Company be affirmed, but as to the defendants Hutton and Berger it be reversed and a new trial granted.

LETTON and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment as to the American Bonding & Trust Company be affirmed, but as to the defendants Hutton and Berger it be reversed and a new trial granted.

JUDGMENT ACCORDINGLY.

ARTHUR T. GALLAWAY ET AL., APPELLANTS, V. ROCHESTER
LOAN AND BANKING COMPANY ET AL., APPELLEES.

FILED OCTOBER 19, 1905. No. 13,940.

Judgment: RECORDING. Delay in entering on the records of the district court a judgment pronounced in open court will not invalidate the judgment in the absence of a fraud perpetrated by such delay.

APPEAL from the district court for Antelope county:
JOHN F. BOYD, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

W. V. Allen, E. D. Kilbourn and Powers & Hays, for appellants.

M. F. Harrington, N. D. Jackson and S. D. Thornton,
contra.

OLDHAM, C.

This is an action by the plaintiffs, who were the former owners of a number of tracts of real estate in Antelope county, to expunge a journal entry confirming the sale of these lands in a foreclosure proceeding in the district court for Antelope county, and for permission to redeem

from the mortgage. The defendants are the purchasers at the mortgage sale and their vendees. There was a trial of the issues to the court and judgment in favor of the defendants. To reverse this judgment, plaintiffs have appealed to this court.

From an unnecessarily voluminous record we have gleaned the following abridged statement of the facts and issues involved in the controversy: On and prior to the first day of August, 1896, the plaintiffs in this cause of action were the owners in fee of the lands in controversy and other lands in Antelope county, all of which were subject to a first mortgage to Henry L. Pratt. The lands in controversy were also subject to a second mortgage to the Rochester Loan and Banking Company. On the date above mentioned, Henry L. Pratt, as plaintiff, brought an action in the district court for Antelope county to foreclose his mortgage on the lands now in controversy and the other lands, and the Rochester Loan and Banking Company and the plaintiffs herein were made parties defendant to that cause of action. The plaintiffs appeared and answered, claiming to be the owners of the lands. The Rochester Loan and Banking Company appeared and filed a cross-petition on its second mortgage. On the 20th of November, 1896, a decree was entered in favor of the plaintiff, Henry L. Pratt, for the sum of \$14,400, and ordering a sale of the property. On the 4th day of October, 1897, the property involved in this controversy was purchased at the sheriff's sale under the Pratt decree by the Rochester Loan and Banking Company for the sum of \$8,800. The plaintiffs herein objected to the sale, but their objections were overruled and the sale was confirmed, as appears from the records of the court, on the 11th day of November, 1897. An appeal was taken from this order of confirmation to the supreme court and was docketed for hearing, and the order of confirmation of the district court was affirmed in this court on the 5th day of October, 1898, under the following stipulation: "Whereas an order of confirmation was entered in the district court for Ante-

lope county, Nebraska, in the above entitled cause, confirming the sale of the following described real estate, to wit: (Here follows a description of the lands.) And whereas the defendants, William C. Gallaway, Mary R. Gallaway, Arthur T. Gallaway and Emmett E. Gallaway, appealed from said order of confirmation to the supreme court of Nebraska, where such appeal is now pending. And whereas said appellants, William C. Gallaway, Mary R. Gallaway, Arthur T. Gallaway and Emmett E. Gallaway, do not wish to prosecute said appeal. Now, therefore, said appellants hereby consent and request that a final order be entered in this case affirming the judgment and decree of the district court for the said Antelope county, Nebraska, and directing the present sheriff of Antelope county, Nebraska, to execute to the purchaser of the aforesaid real estate deeds for the same and an order of distribution. Arthur T. Gallaway, Emmett E. Gallaway, William C. Gallaway, Mary R. Gallaway, by E. D. Kilbourn, their Att'y."

Under this stipulation the decree was affirmed in this court, and a mandate was returned to the clerk of the district court for Antelope county and entered upon the records of said court. After this mandate was issued, the sheriff executed a deed to the lands in dispute to the Rochester Loan and Banking Company and distributed the purchase price as directed in the decree of confirmation. A portion of these lands was subsequently conveyed by the Rochester Loan and Banking Company to defendant Gilman for the sum of \$11,000, who, relying on his record title, erected improvements thereon in the sum of about \$30,000, prior to the institution of this suit.

The reason urged by the plaintiffs for expunging the journal entry showing the confirmation of the sale by the district court is that the decree confirming the sale was, in fact, entered by the judge of said court after the 11th day of November, 1897, and outside of Antelope county. The evidence relied upon to sustain this contention is a showing that, when the objections to the confirmation of

the sale filed by the present plaintiffs had been overruled, it was discovered that the defendant Rochester Loan and Banking Company had given the sheriff of Antelope county an uncertified check on a foreign bank to cover its bid, and that as there was some doubt as whether the check would be honored or not, it was agreed by all the parties that the decree should not be formally entered until the sheriff had time to collect his money on the check. It is fair to say this was talked of among the attorneys representing the different parties to the action, and that there was an understanding among them that unless the check proved genuine the sale might be set aside to protect the sheriff. The check, however, proved to be genuine, and the sheriff received the money on the bid. A decree was accordingly prepared by counsel for Pratt, the Rochester Loan and Banking Company, and the defendants Gallaway, who are the present plaintiffs. This decree was sent to the district judge, who had gone to a neighboring county during a recess of the court, and was there signed by him and returned to be formally entered of record at the adjourned sitting of the Antelope county district court on December 2, 1897. The decree was entered of the date November 11, 1897, and it gave the defendants, who are the present plaintiffs, 40 days from the final adjournment of the court to prepare and settle a bill of exceptions, and 20 days to file a supersedeas bond. As before stated, the present plaintiffs availed themselves of the leave given in this decree, filed a supersedeas bond within 20 days of the final adjournment of the court, and perfected an appeal from the order of confirmation, which was subsequently affirmed under the stipulation before set out. In the supersedeas bond executed by them in this appeal they recited that a decree of foreclosure of the premises had been entered in the district court on the 11th day of November, 1897. It appeared from the positive testimony of Judge Robertson, who represented Mr. Pratt, and of Judge Jackson and Mr. S. D. Thornton, who represented the Rochester Loan and Banking Company, all of

whom were present when the decree was entered, that the trial judge announced in open court his unequivocal decree confirming the sale when the objections to the confirmation were overruled. The trial court in the instant case found such to be the fact, and we think that such finding is sustained by a clear preponderance of the evidence.

It is well settled in this jurisdiction that mere delay in extending the journal entry of a judgment on the records of the court in which it is entered does not affect the validity of the judgment, when no fraud is perpetrated upon the parties to the judgment or their privies by reason of such delay. *Slater v. Skirving*, 45 Neb. 594. In the case at bar there was no unreasonable delay in entering the judgment of record. It was done before the final adjournment of the term, and the present plaintiffs had all their rights protected in such judgment, so that they might have directly attacked it for any irregularity in their appeal to this court. Instead of doing so they stipulated here to have the judgment of the district court affirmed, and to direct the issuance of the sheriff's deed. This stipulation was entered into with plaintiff Pratt in the foreclosure proceedings in part consideration for his permitting the Gallaways to redeem certain other lands covered by his mortgage. Having aided in procuring a confirmation of the sale on which the present defendants' rights depend, they cannot, either in equity or in conscience, as against those claiming under such judgment, now be heard to say that the judgment is void.

We therefore recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

LETTON and AMES, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

HARGREAVES BROTHERS V. WALTER W. HACKNEY, TRUSTEE.

FILED OCTOBER 19, 1905. No. 14,257.

1. Evidence examined, and held sufficient to sustain the judgment.
2. Instructions examined, and held not prejudicial.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: LINCOLN FROST, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

Tibbets & Anderson, for plaintiff in error.

John S. Bishop and *Mockett & Polk*, *contra*.

OLDHAM, C.

This was an action by the trustee in bankruptcy of Julius M. Erlenborn to recover from the defendants in the court below the amount of an alleged preference received by them as creditors of the bankrupt. There was a trial of the issues to a jury in the court below, a verdict for the plaintiff, and judgment on the verdict. To reverse this judgment defendants bring error to this court.

This case, with the companion case of *Hackney v. Raymond Brothers Clarke Company*, involving the same issues, has been three times before this court for consideration. The facts involved in the controversy have been fully stated and discussed in each of the former opinions, which will render a further statement unnecessary. The instant case was first considered in an unofficial opinion by HASTINGS, C., reported as *Hackney v. Hargreaves Bros.*, 3 Neb. (Unof.) 676. In that opinion a judgment in favor of the defendants in the court below was reversed for an error of the trial court in its instructions to the jury on the question of preference. It was there held, in substance, that, under the facts and circumstances surrounding the transfer of the account of Erlenborn to Kettering, the assumption of such account by Kettering as part of the purchase price of Erlenborn's stock of goods, with

the knowledge of the defendants that it was so intended, amounted to a preference in violation of the national bankruptcy law, if the defendants knew or had reason to believe that such transaction would result in a preference to them over other creditors of Erlernborn of the same class. The companion case of *Hackney v. Raymond Bros. Clarke Co.* was later considered by this court in an opinion delivered by POUND, C., and reported in 68 Neb. 624. In this case a judgment in favor of Raymond Brothers in the court below was recommended for affirmance, it being held in that opinion, in substance, that whether or not the sale of the account of Erlernborn to Kettering was, under the evidence, a sale of an account against a bankrupt, made in the ordinary course of business by the creditor, was a question of fact to be determined by the jury, and it was also held that it was not error for the trial court to exclude the schedule of liabilities filed by Erlernborn in the bankruptcy proceedings. Motions for rehearing were filed in each of the above causes. The two motions were considered together, and an exhaustive opinion, which went into every material fact in the controversy, was delivered by HOLCOMB, C. J., and is reported in 68 Neb. 633. In this latter opinion, the opinion of HASTINGS, C., *supra*, was adhered to, and the opinion of POUND, C., *supra*, so far as in conflict therewith, was vacated and set aside, it being held that the transfer of the account in the manner detailed by the testimony was not a sale of the account of the debtor in the ordinary course of trade, and it was further held, specifically, that it was error for the trial court to exclude from the evidence the schedule filed in the bankruptcy proceedings.

The first question called to our attention is that the evidence is not sufficient to sustain the judgment. An examination of the testimony shows facts and circumstances to have existed sufficient to have placed an ordinarily prudent man on inquiry as to the financial condition of Erlernborn at the time the preference was accepted.

The next objection called to our attention is as to the

Hargreaves Bros. v. Hackney.

alleged error of the trial court in giving the concluding sentence of paragraph 8 of the instructions on its own motion. The portion of the instructions objected to must be read in connection with the entire instruction, as well as the preceding instruction to which it relates. These instructions are as follows:

"(7) If you shall determine from the evidence that Erlenborn January 15, 1900, was insolvent, and consequently that a preference was obtained by the defendants, then, before the plaintiff can recover herein, it will be necessary for him to prove by a preponderance of the evidence that the defendants at the time of the making of said transfer to Kettering and the payment by him of defendants' claim to the amount of \$675 had reasonable cause to believe a preference was thereby intended.

"(8) Therefore, before finding against the defendants, it is necessary for you to conclude from the evidence that they, or A. E. Hargreaves acting for them, had reasonable cause to believe that a preference was intended. On this point you are instructed that a creditor is not charged with knowledge of his debtor's financial condition from the mere nonpayment of his debt, or from circumstances which give rise to mere suspicion in his mind of possible insolvency; nor is it essential that the creditor should have actual knowledge of or belief in his debtor's insolvency, but that he should have reasonable cause to believe his debtor to be insolvent. He has reasonable cause so to believe if facts and circumstances with respect to the debtor's financial condition are brought home to him, such as would put an ordinarily prudent man upon inquiry, for he is charged with knowledge of the facts which such inquiry should reasonably be expected to disclose; or if he has knowledge of facts and circumstances which would cause a reasonably prudent man so to believe. While constructive notice is sufficient ground for such belief, yet the circumstances upon which such notice is predicated must be of a character to induce belief as distinguished from mere suspicion. *Transactions not in the usual course of trade*

Hargreaves Bros. v. Hackney.

or of the accustomed dealings between the parties are notice of probable wrong, and the creditor is thereby put on inquiry, and is chargeable with all such inquiry would have produced."

It is the italicised portion of the instruction that is objected to, and it is urged that this portion of the instruction assumes that the transfer of the account was not made in the ordinary course of business. This conclusion is fully justified and, unless the evidence is so clear and convincing on this point that no other finding could be supported, the objection is well taken. On this point, however, it was held in the opinion by HOLCOMB, C. J., *supra*, that "the trial court erred in submitting to the jury the question of whether the transactions between Kettering and Erlenborn and the defendants were or were not *bona fide* sales of accounts, or whether they were entered into with the view of securing a preference in violation of the bankruptcy law." In view of this holding the court was justified in declaring as a matter of law that the transaction was "not in the usual course of trade, or of the accustomed dealings between the parties." We are therefore of opinion that, under the peculiar conditions surrounding this transaction, the instructions, as a whole, were rather favorable than otherwise to defendants' theory of the case.

We are asked to review the holding in our last opinion as to the admission of the schedule filed in the bankruptcy proceedings. This question was fully discussed in the former opinion between these same parties, and we see no reason to reexamine it.

As these are the only questions properly called to our attention we recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

LETTON and AMES, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

PETER KOSLOWSKI ET AL. V. DAVID M. NEWMAN, ADMINISTRATOR.

FILED OCTOBER 19, 1905. No. 13,912.

Administrator: POSSESSION OF REAL ESTATE. An administrator is not entitled to the possession of property of which the decedent whose estate he represents died possessed, as against a defendant who shows that he is the equitable owner thereof, in the absence of proof that there are creditors of the estate whose equitable claims to the property take precedence over that of the defendant.

ERROR to the district court for Platte county: CONRAD HOLLENBECK, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

A. M. Post and Whitmoyer & Goudring, for plaintiffs in error.

McAllister & Cornelius and J. J. Sullivan, contra.

DUFFIE, C.

David M. Newman, as administrator of the estate of Frank Mercek, deceased, brought this action against Peter Koslowski and Mary, his wife, to recover from them money and the value of certain chattel property of which the said Mercek died seized, and which was thereafter converted by the plaintiffs in error. The plaintiffs in error filed a joint answer, in which they allege title to the money and property in controversy by virtue of an agreement with the deceased, a copy of which is as follows: "This agreement entered into this 28th day of September, A. D. 1901, between Peter Koslowski, of Duncan, Nebraska, party of the first part, and Frank Mercek, of Duncan, Nebraska, party of the second part, witnesseth that said party of the first part hereby agrees to care for, support and maintain during his life the said party of the second part, providing him with wholesome and necessary food, and to also provide him with a suitable bed and bedding, and, should his resources not be sufficient, the said party of

the first part shall provide him with suitable and necessary clothing; the intention of this agreement being to provide said party of the second part a home during the remainder of his lifetime. The said party of the second part hereby agrees, in consideration of the provisions above enumerated, that at the time of his death all of his property, both real and personal, and of which he dies seized, shall descend to and belong to said Peter Koslowski, the said party of the first part hereto, free and exempt from any claim from any of the heirs of said party of the second part; and for this purpose this agreement shall act as a last will and testament of the said party of the second part. This agreement shall be binding upon the heirs, executors and administrators of the parties to this agreement. Witness the hands of the parties hereto on the day first above written. Peter Koslowski, Frank Mercek, his (X) mark, Mary Koslowski. Witness, G. W. Phillips."

It is also alleged in the answer that, pursuant to said agreement, Peter Koslowski continuously from the date thereof until the death of Mercek on February 7, 1904, provided a home for, and in all respects maintained and supported, the said Mercek, and fully kept and performed all the conditions of said agreement on his part to be kept and performed, and that said Mercek was at the date of his death possessed of money to the amount of \$317.52, and no more, and of personal property of the value of \$9.60, and no more; that upon the death of said Mercek plaintiff in error, Peter Koslowski, took possession of said money and property, and claims to own and hold the same under and by virtue of the agreement aforesaid. It is further alleged that Peter Koslowski, from the money so received by him, paid the necessary funeral expenses of said Mercek and for certain church services requested by said deceased, in all \$93. The answer concludes with a prayer that the title of the said Peter Koslowski in and to said money and property be quieted and confirmed, and for general relief. A reply was filed,

admitting the execution of the agreement above set forth and performance thereof by the said Peter Koslowski, but charging that said agreement was procured by plaintiffs in error by means of fraud and undue influence over said Mercek, and that he was, at the date thereof, mentally enfeebled by senile dementia, and wholly lacking in the capacity to contract. At the conclusion of the evidence the court instructed the jury that the contract with Peter Koslowski, given in evidence by the defendants below and under which they claim title to all the personal property of the deceased, was not available as a defense as against the claim of the administrator, and that they should therefore return a verdict for the plaintiff for the value of the money and property that the defendants had reduced to their possession and converted to their own use. The jury returned a verdict in favor of the administrator in the sum of \$851, and a motion for a new trial being filed, the court overruled the same upon the plaintiff remitting the sum of \$523.48 from the verdict, and entered judgment against defendants below for \$327.52.

We have examined the evidence given on the trial with some care and it establishes to our satisfaction the following: The wife of Frank Mercek died in 1900, at Denton, Nebraska, where the parties then lived. After the death of his wife, and in October, 1900, Frank Mercek went to live with his son, John Mercek, in Polk county, Nebraska, and continued to live with him until June, 1901, when he went to Duncan and commenced boarding with Koslowski. He was, apparently, a strict church member, and one reason given for his going to Duncan to live was that he might be near a church, where he could regularly attend services, his son's farm being 17 miles distant from the church of which he was a member. We are also inclined to believe that he was not satisfied with his treatment, and the two causes combined induced him to remove to Duncan and make his home with Koslowski. He continued in Koslowski's family as a boarder until his bill amounted to \$72, which he paid, and then requested Koslowski to enter into

the agreement which we have copied above. The evidence tends to show that when he came to Duncan he had \$847 in money, and there is also evidence from which it can be fairly inferred that he afterwards sent money to friends in Germany in fulfilment of a request made by his deceased wife. There is not sufficient evidence to support the claim that he was afflicted with any mental disease or disorder, or that he was not capable of transacting business and making the contract with Koslowski with a full understanding of its terms and conditions. The evidence is undisputed that, at the time of his death, being then about 75 years of age, the only money found in his trunk was \$317.52, and he was possessed of a few articles of wearing apparel, a bed and some bedding, and other property, all of but little value; and the trial court very properly refused to enter judgment on the verdict until a remittitur was entered by the plaintiff, if any judgment at all was warranted by the pleadings and evidence.

The district court evidently took the view, urged by counsel for defendant in error, that the administrator was entitled to the possession of all personal property of which Mercek died seized, regardless of any contract existing between the deceased and Koslowski; and this is the principal question to be determined in the case. That Frank Mercek had the legal right to dispose of his property as he saw fit cannot be disputed. If, because of dissatisfaction with his treatment in the home of his son, or because he could not, while living there, attend church to his satisfaction, he desired to change his residence, that was a privilege which no one could deny him. After living with Koslowski for some time, if he found a home there to his satisfaction, he had a right to enter into the contract which he did, and that contract is legal and binding. The rule is well established that one may, for a sufficient consideration, bind himself to make a particular disposition of his property, and such contract, upon performance by the other party, is irrevocable and enforceable upon the death of the promisor. *Kofky v. Rosicky*,

41 Neb. 328; *Teske v. Dittberner*, 65 Neb. 167. We understand that counsel for defendants in error do not controvert this proposition, but they insist that the administrator of Mercek's estate is entitled to the money and property of which he died seized, and that Koslowski should file his claim with the administrator and have it allowed by the probate court. That the administrator is generally entitled to the possession of all personal property of the intestate cannot be doubted; but whether in cases of this character he can, merely by virtue of his appointment and without showing that there are creditors of the estate having rights in the property, demand it from one in possession, claiming title under a contract with the decedent, such as above set out, is the question in dispute. In *Emery v. Darling*, 50 Ohio St. 160, 33 N. E. 715, the syllabus is as follows:

"One sister covenanted in writing with another that, if the latter would reside with her as long as she desired, she would 'give and bequeath' to her all the property, real and personal, of which she should die seized. The sister to whom the promise was made accepted it, and fully performed the contract on her part. * * * *Held*, That at the death of the sister making the promise the other became the equitable owner of the property of which her sister died seized; and, in specific performance of the contract, is entitled to a conveyance of the legal title from the heirs of her deceased sister."

We think that the rule above announced is correct and should be followed. If, as appears from the evidence in this case, Koslowski fully kept and performed his contract with the deceased, he has fully earned the property. It may be said that, because delivery was not made by the decedent in his lifetime, Koslowski was not invested with the legal title; but that he was the equitable owner seems beyond dispute. He had paid for it in the very terms required by his contract. He had fully performed upon his part. Nothing but a delivery was necessary to invest him with the legal title. It would be a useless and a senseless

proceeding to require him to pass this property over to the administrator with one hand, and award him the right, which the law will not deny, to take it back with the other. It may be, although that is a question which is not presented and which we do not determine, that creditors of the estate of Mercek, who extended credit, relying on this property for payment, if any exist, have a right to be paid out of this money, but there is no showing in this record that any such creditors exist. It is conclusively shown that the expense of the burial had been paid by Koslowski, and we cannot presume that there is other indebtedness to be provided for, and, as between the administrator and Koslowski, we are satisfied that the latter has the better right.

In *Howes v. Whipple*, 41 Ga. 322, A desired to purchase from B a lot of mules on credit, and B refused to sell, and thereupon A proposed to trade to B certain cotton then on A's plantation, which B declined, as he knew nothing of the cotton trade, but offered to let A have the mules if he would deliver the cotton at the warehouse of C, at Macon, to be sold for B's benefit, in payment for the mules, and both the parties went to the warehouseman and stated the contract, and he undertook, as agent of both parties, to receive and sell the cotton, and pay to B the price agreed on for the mules out of the proceeds, and the mules were thereupon delivered to A, who, on going home, commenced hauling cotton to the depot, instructing the agent to send it to C under the contract. After the cotton was delivered at the depot, but before shipment, A suddenly died. It was held that under these facts B had acquired such an interest in the cotton to the extent of the price of the mules that it was not assets of A's estate for distribution, and a court of equity, in a bill filed for direction, would direct so much of the proceeds of the cotton as equaled the price of the mules to be paid to B, and this even as against persons who claimed that A was indebted to them as a trustee, and, consequently, upon a debt of the highest dignity under the statute of distributions. In the opinion it is said:

"Can anyone question that a court of equity would have restrained Mr. Brown from disposing of this cotton otherwise than as he had agreed? Had he attempted to divert it from Hardeman & Sparks, would not equity have compelled him to send it to them, as he had contracted to do? It does not follow that because a sale is not complete, so as to change the possession or give a clear title, the purchaser has no *interest* in the thing. In the case of real estate a court of equity will compel a specific performance to prevent fraud. In cases of personal property, the remedy by suit for damages stands in lieu of this, but the principle is the same, and if it would be a fraud upon the purchaser, and he have no other remedy, the mere fact that the property is personal property does not defeat the party of his remedy. Equity will decree the specific performance of contracts for leases, or the good-will of a trade, and, generally, if there be no adequate remedy at law, equity will grant relief to prevent fraud and injustice."

Asbury v. Hicklin, 181 Mo. 658, 81 S. W. 390, was a case where the deceased left only a personal estate, and, in an action for specific performance of the contract to devise a child's share to the plaintiff, the court held that a court of equity will specifically enforce an oral contract to devise property to another in consideration of services actually rendered, provided the proof of such contract is so cogent, clear and forcible as to leave no reasonable doubt as to its terms and character.

McKinnon v. McKinnon, 56 Fed. 409, was a case where an uncle and his nephew made a partnership agreement, by which it was agreed, "in the event of the death of the senior member of the firm, all his property, personal and otherwise, which he held in partnership at the time of his death, should go to the junior partner." Judge Thayer, in delivering the opinion, said:

"The partnership articles involved in the present controversy were neither intended as a deed nor a will. They constitute an executory agreement, which determines the rights of the parties *inter se*, and provides what disposition

shall be made of the partnership property on the happening of a certain event. In the state of Missouri, where these articles were signed, and where both parties at the time resided and carried on business, it is as well settled as it is in any state of this Union, that an agreement by a person, upon a valuable consideration, to give to another the whole or a part of his property at the promisor's death, will be specifically enforced in equity, both as to real and personal property, if the consideration is duly rendered by the promisee."

It will be seen, therefore, that courts of equity enforce contracts of the character of the one under consideration, whether the property involved is real estate or personalty, and, this being so, Koslowski has an interest in the property of which he took possession as owner thereof, subject, it may be, to some special debts of Mercek, which might be made a charge against this fund.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings not inconsistent with this opinion.

ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings not inconsistent with this opinion.

REVERSED.

MODERN WOODMEN OF AMERICA V. IDA A. PLUMMER.

FILED OCTOBER 19, 1905. No. 13,930.

Review: DISMISSAL. Where the transcript filed in this court does not contain the judgment or final order of the district court sought to be reviewed, the petition in error will be dismissed.

ERROR to the district court for Deuel county: HANSON M. GRIMES, JUDGE. Dismissed.

B. D. Smith and Talbot & Allen, for plaintiff in error.

G. G. McAllister and Wilcox & Halligan, contra.

DUFFIE, C.

The transcript filed in this court consists of the petition, answer, reply, instructions, verdict and motion for a new trial. It does not show that the motion for a new trial was ever passed upon, or that a final judgment has been entered in the case. It is only a judgment or final order rendered by the district court that can be reviewed by the supreme court, and, unless the transcript brought to this court contains such judgment or final order, the proceedings will be dismissed. *Baker v. Kloster*, 41 Neb. 890.

It is recommended that the petition in error be dismissed.

ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the above proceedings are

DISMISSED.

CHICAGO, BURLINGTON & QUINCY RAILWAY COMPANY v.
ALVA TODD.

FILED OCTOBER 19, 1905. No. 13,943.

1. **Market reports in journals**, such as the commercial world relies upon, are competent evidence of the state of the market.
2. **Carriers: DELAY IN TRANSPORTING FREIGHT: DAMAGES.** Where a railroad company negligently refuses to receive and transport freight intended for immediate sale upon the market, such as live stock, it is liable for the expense of keeping the stock, caused by such delay, and for the difference between the price of the stock when it should have arrived at the market and the price when it did actually arrive.

3. **Damages: EVIDENCE.** The class and condition of live stock are material matters in determining their market price, and, in the absence of evidence as to these matters and of what the market price of live stock of the class in question was, damages cannot be awarded from a claimed decline in the market price of stock of the general description of that which the carrier negligently refused to accept and transport.

ERROR to the district court for Dawson county: BRUNO O. HOSTETLER, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

H. M. Sinclair, J. W. Deweese and F. E. Bishop, for plaintiff in error.

Warrington & Stewart, contra.

DUFFIE, C.

February 25, 1903, Alva Todd, the defendant in error, hereafter called the plaintiff, applied to the agent of the railway company for two cars in which to transport sheep and hogs from Farnam, Nebraska, to South Omaha, the cars to be furnished and stock to be shipped on February 28, 1903. The railway company placed the cars on the side track at Farnam on February 27, but on account of a storm the plaintiff did not drive his stock to the station until Saturday afternoon, the 28th, and too late to be shipped that day, there being but one freight train, which usually left the station for the east about 7:15 A. M. At the time of ordering the cars the agent informed the plaintiff that his sheep could not be shipped until they were inspected by a government inspector, on account of an order in force prohibiting the railway company from transporting sheep without a certificate from the inspector that they were free from disease. The agent, at Todd's request, wired to Grand Island for an inspector, but failed to secure one. The order requiring inspection was issued February 9, 1903, but on the 26th of February, 1903, the following modification of the order was made, of which the agent had no notice: "On account of requests of representatives of the South Omaha packing industry, and with

the consent of Governor Mickey, I wish to modify the quarantine notice on sheep, viz., permitting all fat sheep to be marketed up to July 1, 1903, without certificates of inspection. After July 1 you will please comply with the notice issued to you from this office February 9, 1903. Respectfully, W. A. Thomas."

It does not clearly appear from the record whether the plaintiff requested the agent to ship his sheep on Sunday. Monday there was no train, and on Monday evening plaintiff noticed in a newspaper that the quarantine order had been modified, and called this to the attention of the agent of the railway company. Thereupon the agent telegraphed to the general freight agent of the company, and about 11 o'clock Tuesday morning received a dispatch directing him to receive the sheep without inspection. The sheep were loaded Wednesday morning about nine o'clock, the train being late, and arrived in South Omaha at 9:30 o'clock Thursday morning, March 5, and were delivered by the railway company to the Union Stock-Yards Company at 10:45 that same morning, and by that company were sent to the chutes for unloading at 11:10 A. M. The time of the arrival of the stock at South Omaha appears from a stipulation of the parties filed in the case. It further appears from the evidence of W. A. Thomas, state veterinarian, that the quarantine order issued by the state authorities on February 9 was modified, as appears from the order above quoted, on the afternoon of February 26; that notice of such modification was mailed to the railway authorities of the state on the evening of that day, but too late to be carried in the mails before the morning of February 27. The plaintiff in his petition alleges that the company refused to receive his stock until March 4, to his damage in care and expense for feeding same and loss from decline in the market price, and also that there was delay in moving the train, and that his stock was confined in defendant's care without feed and water for an unusual length of time, and as a consequence thereof the said sheep shrank in weight and became rough and gaunt, and

their market value on that account was depreciated in the sum of \$58.20.

The court properly instructed the jury that the railway company was bound to observe and enforce a rule or regulation issued by the proper state authorities requiring an inspection of sheep before receiving the same for shipment, until such time as it had received proper notice and authority from the government officials, acting under such inspection law, of its suspension, and until it had reasonable time to notify its agents that such rule or regulation was no longer in force. And, further, that the jury must be satisfied from the evidence that the defendant did not transport the stock in question within a reasonable time, and because of such fact the plaintiff had sustained damages. There is an entire absence in the instructions of advice to the jury of what they should consider in determining whether the company failed to receive and ship the stock within a reasonable time after the order of February 26 was issued, but as there was no request for a charge by the company on this question it amounts to a failure to instruct upon that particular question, and not a misdirection, and consequently not reversible error. The verdict was for \$140 in favor of the plaintiff, and, as the expense claimed by the plaintiff for keeping his stock at Farnam from February 28 until March 4 was but \$22.60, it is evident that this verdict includes an amount either for the alleged damage to the stock on account of being confined in the cars for an unusual length of time or on account of a decline in the market price of such stock between March 2 and March 6, when they were sold. This requires us to determine whether, under the evidence, the railway company was negligent in not receiving and shipping the stock at an earlier date than it did. The order of the state authorities allowing railway companies to receive and ship fat sheep without an inspection was mailed at Lincoln, Nebraska, on the evening of February 26, and the presumption obtains that it would reach the general offices of the company at Omaha by due course of

mail, which would be on the 27th. There is no evidence showing that the railway company is the owner of any telegraph line, and all that could be expected of it in the use of reasonable diligence would be to notify their agents of this order by due course of mail, and this, we think, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, could have been done as early as March 1 or 2, which would have allowed shipment to be made not later than March 3. There was an unexplained delay in the shipment of from one to two days, and the expense of keeping the stock at Farnam for that time was a proper element of damages.

The plaintiff introduced in evidence copies of the *Daily Drovers Journal-Stockman* of March 2, 5 and 6, 1903, showing the state of the market and the sales of sheep at the stock-yards in South Omaha on these dates. Objection was made to this evidence upon the ground that it was incompetent, irrelevant and immaterial. We do not think the objection well taken. In *Sisson v. Cleveland & T. R. Co.*, 14 Mich. 489, it is said: Market reports in newspapers, such as the commercial world relies upon, are competent as evidence of state of markets. "Such reports, which are based upon a general survey of the whole market, and are constantly received and acted upon by dealers, are far more satisfactory and reliable than individual entries, or individual sales or inquiries."

So, too, do we think that the plaintiff is entitled to recover on account of the depreciation in the market price of his stock between the date when it should have been delivered and the date of its delivery. In *Pett v. Chicago & N. W. R. Co.*, 20 Wis. 624, it is said: "The rule of damages as given to the jury by the circuit court was, that the plaintiff was entitled to recover the difference between the price of the flour when it should have arrived in New York, and the price at the time when it did actually arrive, if it was sold at the latter depreciated price. * * * We think, on principle as well as authority, the ruling of the circuit court as to the measure of damages was right."

While this is the proper rule of damages, we are yet of

the opinion that there is no proper evidence in the record before us to show that the defendant sustained any damage on account of a depreciation in the market price of his sheep. It is true that the Daily Drovers Journal-Stockman introduced in evidence shows that sheep were sold on March 5 at a higher price than that received by the plaintiff, but whether they were the same character of sheep as those reported sold nowhere appears, and it is evident that the character and class of the sheep offered on the market is a material factor in determining the price at which they will sell. Neither do we think that the plaintiff was entitled to any damage on account of his sheep being confined in the company's cars for an unusual length of time. All the evidence is to the effect that the schedule time of the train upon which the sheep were transported is about 24 hours, and the train carrying the sheep left Farnam at 10:45 A. M. and arrived in South Omaha at 9:30 the next morning, making the run in less than schedule time. There was some delay in the train arriving at Farnam on account of what the agent calls having to "double in," that is, the engine had to haul in part of the train and then go back for the remainder, but the plaintiff's stock was confined in the car for less time than if the train had arrived promptly and ran through on schedule time.

For the reason that the record is barren of evidence to support the amount of damages allowed, we recommend a reversal of the judgment and that the cause be remanded.

ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment is reversed and the cause remanded.

REVERSED.

CITY OF OMAHA V. PETER KOCHEM.

FILED OCTOBER 19, 1905. No. 13,951.

1. **Cities: SIDEWALKS.** A city, charged with the duty of keeping its streets and sidewalks in safe condition for use, is not required to search for defects therein, where there is no reason to suppose defects may be found.
2. ———: ———: **NOTICE OF DEFECTS.** A city is not charged with implied notice of a latent defect in a sidewalk, producing an injury to a person using the walk, by the existence of a defect therein of a different character and which did not contribute to the injury in any manner.
3. ———: ———: ———. The city of Omaha must use ordinary care and diligence to keep its streets and sidewalks in reasonably safe condition for use by the public, but it will not be charged with implied notice of a latent defect in a sidewalk, not apparent on ordinary inspection, until such time or the happening of such event as would challenge the attention of a man of ordinary diligence, charged with a like duty, to such defect.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: LEE S. ESTELLE, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

C. C. Wright, W. H. Herdman and A. G. Ellick, for plaintiff in error.

John C. Cowin and Isador Ziegler, contra.

DUFFIE, C.

Peter Kochem brought this action to recover from the city of Omaha damages sustained from a fall occasioned by a defect in the sidewalk on Cuming street in said city. In his brief his claim is set forth in the following language: "Defendant in error on January 2, 1903, between the hours of 4 and 5 o'clock in the afternoon, while walking to his home on the north side of Cuming street in the city of Omaha, stepped upon the cover of a scuttle hole that was partially removed from said hole owing to the want of fasteners which would have held said cover firmly in its place, thereby kicking the same entirely off, and being

violently precipitated into the excavation directly beneath. By reason of said fall he sustained severe bruises to his head and leg, several ribs being fractured and his chest wall caved in, and was unable to perform any manual labor for nearly 4 months." Judgment went in favor of Kochem, and the city has prosecuted error to this court.

The errors principally relied on are that the evidence is insufficient to sustain the verdict, in that the city had no actual notice of the defective condition of the walk, and that, in consequence of the defect not being visible on ordinary inspection, the city cannot be charged with implied notice of the defect; and, second, a claimed faulty instruction given by the court..

It is not claimed that the scuttle hole in the sidewalk and the cover over the same were faulty in their original construction. It is conceded, however, that the iron bolts by which the cover was fastened over the hole and which extended below into the area way beneath, where they were made fast, were broken two or three weeks previous to the accident, and that, in consequence, the cover had become displaced on several occasions prior to Kochem's injury. On each of these occasions the cover was at once replaced by those who saw it, and there is no evidence whatever that any officer of the city had any actual knowledge of the defect or that the cover had become displaced. It might further be stated that the cement walk surrounding the scuttle hole had become worn prior to the breaking of the bolts, and that there was some evidence to the effect that the cover would slip on account of such wearing away. This fact seems to be immaterial, as the evidence is conclusive that the accident was caused by the breaking of the fasteners underneath the cover of the scuttle hole, which defect could not be seen from the sidewalk. In order to see the broken rods the cover would have to be lifted, and the wearing away of the cement around the scuttle hole did not throw the cover above the sidewalk, or show any imperfection or defect which would be visible to one passing along the walk.

The third instruction of the court is in the following language: "Negligence is the gist of this action, and the burden of proving the negligence on the part of the defendant city, as alleged in plaintiff's petition, is upon the plaintiff, and, before he would be entitled to recover in this action, he must prove the negligence so alleged in his petition on the part of said defendant by a fair preponderance of the evidence, and in this case, if you find from the evidence that the said scuttle hole in controversy was constructed in such manner as was considered, exercising ordinary reason and prudence, ordinarily safe to persons passing along and over the same, using ordinary care and diligence, or that said scuttle hole became out of repair and unsafe and defective, and that said defendant city through its authorities had no knowledge of the same, and that such defective condition had not existed a sufficient length of time, or said defective condition existed in such manner that by the exercise of ordinary care and diligence the said defendant city could not have known it, then and in that event said defendant city would not be liable, and your verdict should be accordingly." The foregoing instruction was approved by this court, *City of Lincoln v. Pirner*, 59 Neb. 634, and relating thereto the court used the following language:

"By the instruction quoted the jury were informed, in unmistakable terms, that, if the defective condition of the coal-hole was of such a character that the city authorities could not have discovered it by the exercise of ordinary care, the city would not be liable. In other words, the right of the plaintiff to a verdict in her favor was, by the fourth instruction, made to depend upon the accident having resulted from a defect in the sidewalk which was so evident and open to view that actual knowledge of it must, in the usual course of events, have reached the agents and servants of the city, if they had faithfully performed the duty imposed upon them by law in seeing that the public streets were safe for those having occasion to use them. The jury, following the instructions of the court, could not have found for the plaintiff without

first finding that the defect in the sidewalk was a visible defect—one which ought to have been discovered and remedied by the city authorities before the accident happened. The conclusion of the jury upon this point is a just one. It is an eminently fair deduction from all the evidence in the case."

This puts the court upon record as holding that, where the defect is latent, not visible to ordinary inspection, implied notice of the defect will not be presumed and will not be charged against the city, until something occurs from which notice may be presumed or implied. In the same case at page 638 it is said:

"The action being grounded on negligence, the test of liability is whether the municipal authorities did everything which, under the circumstances, ordinary care and prudence required them to do; and the rule is that an omission of duty is not to be inferred from a failure to search for defects in a sidewalk where there is no reason to suppose defects may be found."

This holding is followed in *Nothdurft v. City of Lincoln*, 66 Neb. 430, and in that case it was further held that "it is not sufficient to show notice of a particular defect which is different in kind from, and in no way related to, the one that produced the injury, and did not contribute thereto in any manner."

The rule that latent defects, not visible on ordinary inspection, will not charge the city with implied notice is held in *Cook v. City of Anamosa*, 66 Ia. 427. And *Duncan v. City of Philadelphia*, 173 Pa. St. 550, 34 Atl. 235, and *Cooper v. City of Milwaukee*, 97 Wis. 458, 72 N. W. 1130, seem inclined to the same view. A head-note in the Iowa case is in the following language: "A city is not charged with notice of a defect in a sidewalk which is not apparent to the ordinary observer, and whose existence is not known to the inhabitants of the city generally." This rule is broader than we care to establish, and broader, we think, than that recognized in *Anderson v. City of Albion*, 64 Neb. 280. In a city the size of Omaha it would be

going to great lengths to say that the city should not be charged with notice of a defect in its streets until it became so notorious as to be known throughout the city, but we are of the opinion that it should be known to more than those who occupy the premises adjacent to the street upon which the defect exists, or be so open and visible that ordinary inspection and ordinary care would bring it to the knowledge of those in charge of the streets. There is no evidence in the record before us that anyone, except those occupying the premises in the immediate vicinity of the sidewalk where the accident occurred, had any knowledge that the cover to this scuttle hole had ever become displaced, unless it be the evidence of one witness, who testified that on one occasion about a week previous to the accident he saw the hole uncovered, and a traveler along the sidewalk immediately replaced the cover. The occupant of the premises testified that he saw the cover off on but two or three occasions, and a fair deduction from the evidence is that during the two or three weeks previous to the accident, and while the fastenings were broken, the cover was not off to exceed a half a dozen times, and on each occasion was immediately replaced. The instructions as a whole fairly presented the law of the case, but, in our opinion, the verdict was clearly in conflict with the third instruction above quoted and is not supported by the evidence.

We recommend that the judgment be reversed and the cause remanded.

ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment is reversed and the cause remanded.

REVERSED.

JOHN V. AINSWORTH, RECEIVER, APPELLANT, v. JOSEPH
ROUBAL ET AL., APPELLEES.

FILED OCTOBER 19, 1905. No. 14,200.

1. Evidence examined, and held to show the conveyance attacked fraudulent except as to one mortgage.
2. Creditors' Suit: LIMITATION OF ACTIONS. A party cannot maintain an action in the nature of a creditors' suit to reach property of his debtor fraudulently conveyed until the claim has been reduced to judgment, and until judgment is obtained by the creditor the statute of limitations will not, under ordinary circumstances, commence to run against such a suit. *Gillespie v. Cooper*, 36 Neb. 775, so far as it holds a contrary doctrine, disapproved.
3. ———: ATTACHMENT. The creditor, if he chooses, may, before reducing his claim to judgment, commence an action aided by attachment and seize the estate fraudulently conveyed by his debtor, and after judgment in the attachment suit he may enforce his lien by an action in the nature of a creditors' bill. This course may be pursued, whether the debtor is a resident of the state or a nonresident. *Keene v. Sallenbach*, 15 Neb. 200; *Kenard, Daniels & Co. v. Hollenbeck*, 17 Neb. 362; *Kimbrow v. Clark*, 17 Neb. 403.

APPEAL from the district court for Dodge county: CONRAD HOLLENBECK, JUDGE. *Reversed with directions.*

F. I. Foss, R. D. Brown, Courtright & Sidner, C. H. Sloan and J. D. Pope, for appellant.

Frank Dolezal, contra.

DUFFIE, C.

The plaintiff and appellant, who is receiver of the State Bank of Milligan, Fillmore county, Nebraska, brought this action against the defendants and appellees to subject certain lands in Dodge county, Nebraska, to the payment of a judgment obtained by him against Joseph Roubal, the record title of which stands in the name of Josephine Roubal, wife of said Joseph. For a clear understanding

of the case it is necessary to set out somewhat in detail a history of the litigation between the parties.

In November, 1897, the plaintiff recovered judgment against Joseph Roubal in the sum of \$4,700 in the district court for Fillmore county upon the bond of one Fiala, on which Roubal was surety. November 24, 1897, Joseph Roubal and wife executed a deed to James Vech, a brother-in-law, conveying to him the land in controversy in this action. November 27, 1897, the plaintiff filed a transcript of his judgment obtained in Fillmore county in the office of the clerk of the district court for Dodge county. December 9, 1897, James Vech and wife deeded the property to Louis J. Kudrna. December 10, 1897, the plaintiff caused execution to be issued on his judgment and delivered to the sheriff of Dodge county, and on the following day the sheriff levied on the real estate in controversy, and caused the same to be advertised for sale as the property of Joseph Roubal, who had during all the time remained in possession of the premises. January 21, 1898, and previous to a sale being made under the execution, Kudrna obtained an injunction from the district court for Dodge county, restraining the sheriff from proceeding to a sale under his execution. The plaintiff applied to the court to be made a party to this action, and filed an answer and cross-bill in that case, bringing in other defendants. His cross-petition was in the nature of a creditors' bill, seeking to subject the land to the payment of his judgment. April 21, 1900, a decree was entered in said action, setting aside the different transfers, and declaring the real estate to be the property of Joseph Roubal, and ordering it sold, subject to his homestead interest. The defendants in that action filed a supersedeas and took an appeal to this court. In the meantime the law action in which plaintiff's judgment had been obtained in Fillmore county was appealed to this court by the defendant Roubal, and on November 20, 1901, an opinion was filed, reversing said judgment and remanding the case for another trial. See *Fiala v. Ainsworth*, 63 Neb. 1. March 21, 1902, a second trial of

the law action was had in Fillmore county, in which the plaintiff herein obtained judgment against the defendant Joseph Roubal for the sum of \$7,364.45. On the same day Joseph Roubal and his wife executed three mortgages upon the land in controversy; one to George Bauman for the sum of \$661, one to Mary Vech for the sum of \$1,060, and one to Frank Dolezal for the sum of \$2,000. March 28, 1902, the plaintiff filed a transcript of his new judgment obtained in Fillmore county with the clerk of the district court for Dodge county. April 5, 1902, Louis J. Kudrna conveyed the land in controversy to Josephine Roubal, wife of Joseph Roubal. September 18, 1902, the decree in the injunction and creditors' bill case tried in Dodge county was reversed by this court and the case dismissed, for the reason that the judgment upon which it was based had been reversed on November 20, 1901. *Kudrna v. Ainsworth*, 65 Neb. 711. The present action was commenced in the month of March, 1903, the amended petition upon which the case was tried being filed on May 7, 1904. On the trial a decree was entered dismissing the plaintiff's petition upon the ground, as we understand, that his action was barred by the statute of limitations.

We have carefully examined the evidence contained in the record, and have arrived at the conclusion that there can be no doubt that the conveyance made by Joseph Roubal to James Vech, and the several deeds thereafter made, were for the purpose of avoiding the indebtedness due from Joseph Roubal, the plaintiff, and finally vesting title to the property in Josephine Roubal, his wife. It is unnecessary to discuss this evidence, as even a casual reading will satisfy the mind of any disinterested party that the conveyances, aside from the mortgages mentioned which will be considered later, were colorable only, and without any good faith consideration paid. This brings us to the consideration of the statute of limitations relied on by the defendants and sustained by the district court. That court evidently relied on, and felt bound by, the holding in *Gillespie v. Cooper*, 36 Neb. 775; and, if that

case is to be followed and recognized as the correct rule to be applied in actions of this character, then there is no question that the decree appealed from will have to be affirmed. The deed from Roubal to Vech was made in 1897, while this action was not commenced until 1903, six years after the making and recording of this fraudulent deed. The defendants insist that the plaintiff might have attached the land in controversy, notwithstanding the fact that he had reduced his claim to judgment prior to the fraudulent conveyance, and cite *Strickler v. Hargis*, 34 Neb. 471, in support of this contention. If we concede this to be the rule, then the holding in *Gillespie v. Cooper*, *supra*, if adhered to, is fatal to the plaintiff's claim. In that case it was held that an action in the nature of a creditors' bill must be commenced within four years from the discovery of the fraud. We quote from the opinion at page 790:

"Were the appellees limited to a *creditors' bill* in order to obtain relief from this fraudulent conveyance? We think not. Appellees could have attached the property on the ground that it was fraudulently conveyed to Richards for the purpose of delaying Mrs. Cooper's creditors. Code, sec. 198, subd. 8; *Keene v. Sallenbach*, 15 Neb. 200; *Brown v. Brown*, 91 Ky. 639, 11 S. W. 4; *Rogers v. Brown*, 61 Mo. 187. For this court to hold that appellees' cause of action did not accrue—the fraud discovered—until appellees were in a position to file a creditors' bill would be to judicially amend this statute and leave it to the discretion of creditors to fix the time of the accrual of their cause of action by hastening or delaying the recovery of judgment. A case might arise where, by reason of the debtor being a nonresident, a personal judgment could not be obtained. In such case would appellee have no cause of action for relief on the ground of fraud until the debtor became a resident and a personal judgment was entered against him? It is an old maxim that for every wrong the law affords a remedy, but if one effectual remedy is afforded by the law the maxim is complied with."

Upon mature consideration we are unable to agree with the conclusion reached by the learned commissioner from whose opinion we have taken the above quotation, or the reasoning by which the conclusion is arrived at, and yet we have hesitated to interfere with the law established by that case, upon the principle that it is better that a rule once announced should be permanent and certain, rather than that it should in all cases establish the technically correct rule. The principle involved is, however, of so much importance to the profession and to the people of the state, and the construction given the statute in *Gillespie v. Cooper, supra*, so radically different from our views of its true meaning, that we think it better to get back to what we believe to be the correct doctrine at the earliest date possible. It has always been the rule in this state that a suit of this nature could not be maintained until the plaintiff had reduced his claim to judgment. When he has obtained his judgment at law, he can then appeal to the equity court to assist him in removing an obstruction to the collection of that judgment by clearing up what bidders might regard as a doubtful title. From this it will be seen that the right does not accrue to the creditor to maintain a creditors' bill until after judgment; and our statute of limitation does not by its terms commence to run against any suitor in our courts until his cause of action has accrued. Section 5 of the code is as follows: "Civil actions can only be commenced within the time prescribed in this title, after the cause of action shall have accrued."

It is true that an extraordinary remedy is offered for the relief of creditors where the debtor is seeking to defraud them. An attachment may be had in such a case, whether the creditor's claim be due or not, but we might here remark that the general rule appears to be that the extraordinary remedy afforded the creditor by an attachment does nothing more than give him a lien upon the property attached, and does not entitle him to a judgment until his debt has matured. In this state the

statute provides that the plaintiff shall not have judgment until his claim is due. Code, sec. 242. By this method he may obtain a lien upon his debtor's property giving him priority over other creditors who had not been so vigilant, but his right to a judgment, in case his claim has not matured, is not at all advanced by this proceeding.

Again, it is undisputed law that a creditor who has two remedies offered him may elect which remedy he will pursue, and it is no objection that one remedy is barred by the statute, provided the remedy which he elects is not barred. *Lamb v. Clark*, 5 Pick. (Mass.) 193. In *Shipp v. Davis*, 78 Ga. 201, it is said:

"Where the creditor had an election between two rights of action for the same debt, he may, after one of them is barred, maintain a suit on the one not barred."

Let us see what would be the practicable result of the rule announced in *Gillespie v. Cooper*, *supra*. A, having a cause of action against B upon a note, might, upon learning that B had fraudulently transferred his property, commence an action in attachment, whether the note had matured or was not yet due. C, having a cause of action against B for a tort committed, could not obtain an attachment, his demand not being liquidated. As against A, therefore, the statute of limitation would run from the discovery of the fraud. As against C, the cause of action would commence to run only from the time of reducing his claim to judgment, or, if it should be held that it did commence to run, we would have the anomaly of the statute running against a claim upon which a right of action had not accrued to the plaintiff. The principle for which we are contending is well expressed by the supreme court of South Carolina in *Suber v. Chandler*, 18 S. Car. 526, in the following language:

"This principle, unless authority beyond question the other way can be found, ought to control in a case like this. It is claimed that these principles cannot apply in the face of the positive decision in this state that the

statute commences at the discovery of the fraud. This doctrine is not denied, but it must be taken in connection with that other principle, also held in this state, that to give currency to the statute there must be a plaintiff who can sue and a defendant who can be sued. *Bugg v. Summer*, 1 McM. *333. The discovery of the fraud by a party who cannot sue on account of it amounts to no discovery. These are cases where an action can be commenced the moment the fraud is discovered, and to such cases this doctrine is properly applicable, but in those cases where this discovery gives no right of action at the time, the reason of its application entirely fails."

We apprehend, also, that the reasoning in *Gillespie v. Cooper*, *supra*, is unsound in its statement that fraud is the cause of action for which an attachment may be issued. In our view, the fraud of the debtor is not the cause of action. The cause of action is the debt due from the defendant to the plaintiff. That the defendant has fraudulently conveyed his property does not give the plaintiff a cause of action of which he is not already possessed. It merely gives him the right to sue on an unmatured claim, if his debt has not matured, and to have the assistance of a writ of attachment because of the defendant's fraudulent act. The cause of action is still the note or contract, the debt upon which the defendant is liable. The defendant's fraudulent acts merely give the plaintiff a remedy for securing his demand. As before remarked, it is true that the plaintiff, because of the fraud of the defendant, may have the assistance of a writ of attachment to secure his claim before judgment, but this right is given him as a security only, and not as a new cause of action, nor can it be used by one not having a cause of action in aid of which it may be invoked. After judgment at law, the creditor may pursue the following remedies: If he has not attached, he may file his creditors' bill against the fraudulent vendee of his debtor's estate. If he has attached the estate fraudulently conveyed, he may, if he elects so to do, sell the attached property and,

Ainsworth v. Roubal.

after sale and deed obtained, bring his action to quiet title against the fraudulent grantee; or he may, if he prefers, before the sale, call upon a court of equity to cancel the fraudulent deed, remove the obstruction, and declare the fraudulent conveyance void as to him. In the latter case the equity court is merely lending its assistance to the legal tribunal to enforce its judgment. The equitable action in such case is merely ancillary to the legal action, and in aid thereof. The fraudulent vendor is not a necessary party to any of these equitable proceedings, unless he has attempted to reserve some right or interest to himself in the estate conveyed; but the fraudulent grantee is an indispensable party, as it is the deed under which he claims that is attacked for fraud; and it is in one or the other of these actions that the plaintiff's cause of action is grounded upon the fraud of his debtor in conveying the estate sought to be reached, and of the vendee in accepting the conveyance. Not until the conveyance is attacked by a bill in equity is the plaintiff's cause of action based upon fraud; then for the first time is fraud his cause of action, and then for the first time can the statute of limitations of four years, in which an action for fraud is barred, be pleaded as a defense to such cause of action.

There are other reasons which appeal to the legal mind for refusing our assent to the doctrine of *Gillespie v. Cooper, supra*. As before stated, the creditor who has two remedies may pursue whichever remedy he may elect, and he is certainly entitled to pursue the ordinary and usual remedy afforded him by the laws of the state, and is not called upon to adopt the extraordinary and hazardous remedy of attaching his debtor's property, unless he believes it for his best interest so to do in order to gain a preference over other creditors. So, also, is he entitled, if he so desires, to pursue a remedy that gives him the right to try the question of fraud on issue duly made by the pleadings, and to cross-examine the witnesses of his adversary; in other words, to have the benefit of a formal trial to the court on the issue made, which is denied him

on a motion to dissolve his attachment, if the defendant elects to pursue that course. His failure to pursue this extraordinary remedy will not, in our opinion, start the running of the statute of limitations against a remedy which had not then matured. The authorities are practically agreed that the statute of limitations does not commence to run against a creditors' bill until the creditor has reduced his claim to judgment and exhausted his legal remedies. *Rose v. Dunklee*, 12 Colo. App. 403, 56 Pac. 342; *Mickel v. Walraven*, 92 Ia. 423, 60 N. W. 633; *Gates v. Andrews*, 37 N. Y. 657; *Weaver v. Haviland*, 142 N. Y. 534; *Reynolds v. Lansford*, 16 Tex. 286; *Wilson v. Buchanan*, 7 Grat. (Va.) 334; Bump, *Fraudulent Conveyances* (3d ed.), 547; *Brown v. Campbell*, 100 Cal. 635, 38 Am. St. Rep. 314; *Harrell v. Kea*, 37 S. Car. 369, 16 S. E. 42. Being convinced that the doctrine announced in *Gillespie v. Cooper*, *supra*, as follows: "The statute begins to run against a creditor from the discovery of the fraudulent act on the part of his debtor, whether the creditor's claim has been reduced to judgment or not, as he is not limited to a creditors' bill in order to obtain relief on the ground of fraud, but may attach the property fraudulently conveyed"—was announced without sufficient consideration, the same is overruled.

The defendants also relied upon the case of *State v. Osborn*, 143 Ind. 671, in which the following was held: "That judgment against a debtor was not rendered until after the expiration of the six years within which a conveyance by the debtor, fraudulent as to his creditors, could be attacked, due to the fact that the debtor persistently fought the action, does not entitle the creditor to sue to set aside such conveyance after the expiration of such time." (42 N. E. 921.) We do not think that this head-note fairly reflects the reasoning of the court. A careful reading of the opinion discloses that judgment was obtained against the defendant long prior to the expiration of the six years limited by statute for commencing an action upon the ground of fraud. The de-

fendant appealed the case to the supreme court, but did not supersede the judgment, and the creditors' suit could have been commenced immediately upon obtaining judgment, instead of waiting two or three years, as was done, for the opinion of the supreme court, and during which time the statute barred the action. In that case the plaintiff had every opportunity to prosecute his action before the statute intervened, whereas, in the present case, more than ordinary diligence has been shown by the plaintiff in pressing his demand and seeking the assistance of the court to enforce it. We do not wish to be understood as holding that a party having a matured claim may postpone the running of the statute of limitation at his pleasure by neglecting to bring suit within a reasonable time after discovering the fraud of his debtor. Equity requires a creditor to be active and diligent. In *Earl of Deloraine v. Browne*, 3 Brown, Ch. (Eng.) *633, *640, it is said that nothing will cause a court of equity to act "but conscience, good faith, and reasonable diligence. Where these are wanting, the court is passive, and does nothing." And we quite agree with the supreme court of Iowa, expressed in *Mickel v. Walraven, supra*, that "when, by reason of the laches and delay of the complainant, it has become doubtful whether the other parties can produce the evidence which is necessary to a fair presentation of the case on their part, or when it appears that they have been misled to their disadvantage by such conduct, a court of equity will deal with the remedy as barred. In such cases the court acts in obedience to the spirit of the statutes of limitations, and adopts the reasons and principles on which they are founded, rather than their literal requirements."

Coming now to the mortgage liens upon the land, it is shown that the mortgage executed to Dolezal was for services rendered in the various suits growing out of this transaction and expenses incurred therein. We incline to the belief that the amount of his mortgage is not excessive for the services performed, and that he is entitled to a

first lien upon the property. The evidence relating to the consideration for the mortgages of Mrs. Vech and George Bauman is very unsatisfactory. Mrs. Vech, who is a sister-in-law of Joseph Roubal, was for a long time a member of his family. It is claimed that she loaned him \$500 some 20 years or more previous to the making of this mortgage. No note or other evidence of indebtedness was given at the time, nor intervening the loan and the making of the mortgage. No memorandum appears to have been kept of the state of the account between them, and, while it may be true that the money was furnished by Mrs. Vech, none of the circumstances disclosed tend to show that it was regarded as a loan. Bauman is a nephew of Joseph Roubal, and was about 18 years of age at the time it was claimed he furnished money to Mrs. Roubal to purchase certain property offered at sheriff's sale. There is no pretense that he had money, except what was earned by working out on a farm. No note was given or memorandum made of the amount claimed to have been furnished by him at the time. The circumstances do not impress us with the belief that the consideration was in fact advanced out of his own means. As between the parties these mortgages are good, but we think that they ought to be postponed to the claims of the plaintiff.

We recommend, therefore, that the decree of the district court be reversed, and that a decree be entered subjecting the land in dispute, after setting aside the homestead interest of Joseph Roubal and wife, to the payment of the plaintiff's judgment, after first satisfying the mortgage of the defendant Dolezal, and that the cause be remanded to the district court for that purpose.

ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the decree of the district court is reversed, and the cause remanded to the district court, with directions

to enter a decree subjecting the land in dispute, after setting aside the homestead interest of Joseph Roubal and wife, to the payment of the plaintiff's judgment, after first satisfying the mortgage of the defendant Dolezal.

REVERSED.

CHARLES E. YATES ET AL. V. JONES NATIONAL BANK.*

CHARLES E. YATES ET AL. V. UTICA BANK.†

CHARLES E. YATES ET AL. V. THOMAS BAILEY.†

CHARLES E. YATES ET AL. V. BANK OF STAPLEHURST.†

FILED OCTOBER 19, 1905. Nos. 13,030, 13,031, 13,032, 13,033.

1. **Banks: MISCONDUCT OF OFFICERS: ACTION FOR DAMAGES.** Damages resulting to a national bank from the misfeasance or mismanagement of its officers are assets of the bank, and are recoverable only in an action brought by the bank or for the benefit of all the stockholders and creditors thereof.
2. ———: **OFFICERS: LIABILITY: ACTION.** The officers of a national bank are personally liable for false reports made and published by them in pursuance of section 5,211, Revised Statutes, United States, to the party injured thereby, and the right of the injured party to maintain the action does not rest on the federal statute but the common law.
3. **False Reports: ACTION: DEFENSE.** It is no defense to an action of that character that such reports were made and published by the officers without knowledge of their falsity. Following *Gerner v. Mosher*, 58 Neb. 135.
4. **Res Judicata.** A cause of action, once finally determined between the parties on the merits, cannot afterwards, so long as such judgment remains in force, be litigated by new proceedings, either before the same or any other tribunal.
5. ———: **DEMURRER.** The foregoing rule applies, not only to judgments which are the result of a trial of issues of fact, but also to judgments on demurrer, where such judgments go to the merits of the case; but a judgment on a demurrer, which is based on a technical defect of pleading, a lack of jurisdiction, or the like, does not involve the merits of the controversy, and will not support the plea of *res judicata*.

* Reversed, 206 U. S. 158.

† Reversed, 206 U. S. 181.

6. **Dismissal.** The voluntary dismissal of an action before final submission does not operate as an estoppel, and is without prejudice to a future action.
7. ———: **COSTS: SECOND ACTION.** Under our practice the common law rule, making the payment of costs in the action dismissed a prerequisite to the prosecution of another, is one which the trial court in the exercise of a sound discretion may or may not apply.
8. **Evidence examined, and held sufficient to sustain the findings of the jury.**

ERROR to the district court for Seward county: SAMUEL H. SORNBORGER, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

J. W. Deweese and Halleck F. Rose, for plaintiffs in error.

R. S. Norval and J. J. Thomas, contra.

ALBERT, C.

In 1893 the Jones National Bank and the Bank of Staplehurst each brought an action against Charles W. Mosher, Homer E. Walsh, David E. Thompson, Charles E. Yates, Ellis P. Hamer, Ambrose P. S. Stuart, Richard C. Outcalt and Rollo O. Phillips; and Thomas Bailey and the Utica Bank each brought an action against all of the said defendants except David E. Thompson. The actions were brought in the district court for Lancaster county, and the several petitions, so far as the present inquiry is concerned, as substantially the same, and the allegations are, in effect, as follows: That from the 9th day of December, 1886, to the 21st day of January, 1893, the Capital National Bank of Lincoln was a corporation duly organized and existing under and by virtue of the banking laws of the United States; that the defendants were the directors and officers thereof, and, as such, had exclusive control and management of its affairs; that during the whole of said period the bank was insolvent, as the defendants well knew, or by the exercise of due dili-

gence would have known, and that on or about the 23d day of January, 1893, it passed into the hands of a receiver, who at the commencement of the action was in possession of all of its assets; that from the 9th day of December, 1886, to the date such bank passed into the hands of the receiver, the defendants, in pursuance of the banking laws of the United States and on the demand of the comptroller of the currency, from time to time made statements, and caused and permitted statements to be made, to the comptroller of the currency, purporting to show the financial condition of such bank at the time such statements were respectively made, and caused such statements to be published in certain newspapers of general circulation in this state; that the defendants, although chargeable with knowledge of the true condition of said bank and that it was not in a prosperous condition, but insolvent, when such reports were respectively made, for the purpose of deceiving the plaintiff and others and thereby inducing them to deposit their money in said bank, made out and caused said statements to be made in such a way as to show that the bank was in a prosperous condition, and that it was safe and solvent; that such statements were brought to the notice of the plaintiff and that, relying thereon and believing them to be true, the plaintiff, induced thereby, made certain deposits in the said bank before it passed into the hands of the receiver; that, if each of the defendants did not have actual knowledge of the false and fraudulent character of such statements, and of the actual condition of the bank when such statements were made, his lack of knowledge was the result of his gross negligence in respect to his duties as an officer of the bank. Then follow allegations to the effect that the defendants, as officers of such bank, had loaned sums of money and had allowed and paid dividends to its stockholders while the bank was insolvent, contrary to, and in violation of, the banking laws of the United States. The concluding allegations are as follows: "And, by reason of the several violations

of the banking law, as above set forth, by these several defendants, they have become, and are, liable to this plaintiff for the damages he has sustained by reason of their said acts in the sum of \$11,500, together with interest thereon from the 11th day of October to the 28th day of December, 1892, at the rate of seven per cent. per annum." In each case the defendants demurred on four grounds: (1) Want of jurisdiction of the subject matter. (2) Plaintiff's want of legal capacity to sue. (3) Defect of parties plaintiff. (4) Insufficiency of the facts stated to constitute a cause of action. The defendants also filed petitions, asking the removal of the causes to the federal court, for the reason that the actions involved a construction of the national banking act. The causes were removed, and thereupon the plaintiffs filed motions in the federal court, asking that the causes be remanded, for the reason that they involved no federal question. The motion was overruled.

In the action brought by the plaintiff Bailey, the federal court sustained the demurrer to his petition and dismissed the case. Bailey prosecuted error to the circuit court of appeals, where the rulings of the lower court on the motion to remand and the demurrer to the petition were sustained, and the judgment of dismissal was affirmed. *Bailey v. Mosher*, 63 Fed. 488. Whereupon the other plaintiffs dismissed their actions.

Thereafter, the plaintiffs each brought an action against the parties they had respectively made defendants before in the district court for Seward county. The petitions in the later cases, as they stood at the time of the trial, are substantially the same as those in the former, save that it is not alleged in the latter that the Capital National Bank was organized under the laws of the United States, nor that the statements therein mentioned, purporting to show the financial condition of said bank, were made in pursuance of the banking laws of the United States or on the demand of or to the comptroller of the currency. The concluding of the latter petitions is as

follows: "Plaintiff states that, by reason of the facts as above set forth and the false and fraudulent statements, advertisements and representations of the defendants, the plaintiff has been damaged in the sum of twenty thousand dollars (\$20,000)." On the application of the defendants the case of *Bailey v. Mosher* was removed to the United States circuit court, on the theory that it was brought under the United States banking act for misfeasance or mismanagement of the defendants as officers of a national bank. On motion of the plaintiff the circuit court remanded the cause to the state court, holding that no federal question was involved. *Bailey v. Mosher*, 74 Fed. 15. When the cause again reached the state court, the several petitions were amended by interlineation, whereby they were brought to their present form. Whereupon, on application of the defendants, the cases were removed to the United States circuit court, on the theory that the amendment had injected a federal question. The circuit court overruled a motion to remand, sustained a demurrer to the petition and dismissed the cause. *Bailey v. Mosher*, 95 Fed. 223. On appeal, the question was presented to the circuit court of appeals, the judgment of the circuit court was reversed and the causes remanded to the state court, for the reason that they involved no federal question. *Jones v. Mosher*, 107 Fed. 561.

The subsequent pleadings are somewhat voluminous, and it will suffice to say that the questions hereinafter discussed are sufficiently presented. The defendant Stuart made default and judgment was taken against him. The defendants Hamer and Phillips died after the action was commenced; as to the former the action was revived against his estate; as to the latter no proceedings for revivor were had. The cases were all tried at the same time and submitted on the same evidence. At the close of the evidence the court directed a verdict in each case in favor of the defendant Walsh. As to the other defendants, in the several cases to which they were respectively parties, the jury found for the plaintiff and

judgment was given accordingly, from which the defendants respectively prosecute error to this court.

One of the principal contentions of the defendants, reduced to its simplest form, is as follows: (1) Damages resulting to a national bank from the misfeasance or mismanagement of its officers are assets of the bank, and are recoverable of such officers only in an action brought by the bank, or for the benefit of all the stockholders and creditors. (2) The damages alleged in the petition resulted to a national bank from the misfeasance and mismanagement of its officers. (3) Therefore, such damages are assets of the bank, and are recoverable only in an action brought by the bank, or for the benefit of all the stockholders and creditors. The major premise is so nearly a self-evident proposition that it requires no elaboration. It is recognized in *Bailey v. Mosher*, *supra*, and in the cases there cited. But we are not disposed to accept the minor premise. It is true the petitions show misfeasance and mismanagement on the part of the defendants as officers of the bank, and that the bank thereby sustained damages, but they show more than that. They show that the defendants made and published false and misleading statements concerning the financial condition of the bank, whereby the plaintiffs were induced to become and remain its creditors to their damage. In short, whatever other allegations may be contained in the petition, they also contain sufficient to constitute a common law action for deceit. That the party upon whom the deceit or imposition was practiced by the officers of a national bank may maintain an action against them in his own name and behalf for damages resulting to him therefrom, and that his right of action does not rest on the federal statutes, but the common law, is no longer an open question. *Stuart v. Bank of Staplehurst*, 57 Neb. 569; *Gerner v. Mosher*, 58 Neb. 135; *Gerner v. Yates*, 61 Neb. 100; *Prescott v. Haughey*, 65 Fed. 653; *Gerner v. Thompson*, 74 Fed. 125; *King v. Pomeroy*, 121 Fed. 287; *Briggs v. Spaulding*, 141 U. S. 132.

But it is contended that the petitions are substantially the same as that in *Bailey v. Mosher*, 63 Fed. 488, and that the circuit court of appeals held that such petition committed the plaintiff to the theory that his action was for misfeasance and mismanagement, resulting in damages to the bank, recoverable only in an action by the receiver for the benefit of all the stockholders and creditors. The difference between the petition in that case and those in the cases at bar has already been pointed out, and the importance which the circuit court of appeals attached to some of the allegations of the petition in that case, which are omitted from those now before us, is shown by the following taken from the body of the opinion:

"We feel constrained to hold that, properly construed, the petition contains but one paragraph or count, and states but one cause of action, and that the cause of action stated is one for the misfeasance and mismanagement of the affairs of the bank by the defendants as its officers and directors. We cannot adopt the view of the plaintiff in error that those clauses of the petition which state, or tend to state, a cause of action for deceit at common law, should be segregated from the other clauses of the petition, and held to constitute the statement of the cause of action. The court cannot reject the allegations of the petition which do state a cause of action under the banking act, for the purpose of converting mere matter of inducement or surplusage, contained elsewhere in the petition, into a substantive statement of a cause of action different from that which the petition in terms declares to be the foundation of the action. The plaintiff was not bound to state the legal effect of the facts set out in his petition, but, having done so, he cannot complain if his adversary and the court accept and act upon his own theory. Especially is this so when the petition is ambiguous, and will support that theory as well or better than any other.

"In the sense of the word, as used in code pleading, there is but one paragraph in this petition. The term

'paragraph,' as used in code pleading, means an entire or integral statement of a cause of action. It is the equivalent of 'count' at common law. It may embrace one sentence or many sentences; but, whether one or many, it constitutes a statement of a single cause of action. It is a requirement of some codes that, if the petition contains 'more than one cause of action, each shall be distinctly stated in a separate paragraph and numbered' (code, Ark. sec. 5,027); and all of them require that each cause of action shall be separately stated and numbered. The Nebraska code provides that, 'where the petition contains more than one cause of action, each shall be separately stated and numbered.' Consol. St. Neb. 1891, sec. 4,633 (93). And the supreme court of that state, construing this section, have said: 'A plaintiff cannot jumble his causes of action together.' *Schuyler Nat. Bank v. Bolong*, 24 Neb. 821. If, in drafting the petition, the pleader supposed he was stating more than one cause of action, he would undoubtedly have separately stated and numbered them, as required by the Nebraska code. No one can point out in this petition where the statement of one cause of action ends and another begins. The plaintiff cannot reform or amend his petition in this court. If it were possible to spell out of the averments of this petition, taken separately or together, an action for deceit, the court would be precluded from attaching that meaning to them by the positive statement contained in the petition itself that the action is grounded on the 'violations of the banking law' therein set out. Section 5,239 of the Revised Statutes of the United States provides that: 'If the directors of any national banking association shall knowingly violate, or knowingly permit any of the officers, agents or servants of the association to violate any of the provisions of this title, all the rights, privileges and franchises of the association shall be thereby forfeited. * * * And in cases of such violation, every director who participated in, or assented to, the same shall be held liable in his personal and individual capacity for all

damages which the association, its shareholders, or any other person shall have sustained in consequence of such violation.' It is obvious that the plaintiff, in the inception of this case, had in view the enforcement of the defendants' liability under the last clause of this section."

From the foregoing it is clear that the court proceeded upon the ground that the plaintiff, by those allegations of his petition which are omitted from those in the cases at bar, had committed himself to the theory that his cause of action was one arising under the federal banking law for misfeasance and mismanagement, resulting in damages to the bank. Those very allegations, it held, precluded it from "spelling out" a cause of action for deceit. If those allegations are to be held of such importance when included in a petition, it seems to us that their omission and the studied omission of direct reference to the federal banking law from the petitions in the cases at bar are equally significant. Besides, it was expressly held in *Jones v. Mosher*, 107 Fed. 561, that the petition involved no federal question; consequently, it presented no case arising under the federal banking law. It and the other petitions before us do state a cause of action for deceit. We know of no rule of pleading that would justify this court in assuming that the plaintiff intended to plead a cause of action which he could not maintain, so long as he has pleaded facts sufficient to constitute one which he could maintain. It may be said, in passing, that in this state no such meaning is attached to the term "paragraph" as that given it by the court of appeals in that case.

It is further insisted that the judgment rendered in that case supports the plea of *res judicata* interposed against the plaintiff Bailey in his present action. It is elementary that a cause of action, once finally determined between the parties on the merits, cannot afterwards, and so long as such judgment remains in force, be litigated by new proceedings, either before the same or any other tribunal. And this rule is not limited to judgments

which are the result of a trial of an issue of fact, but applies as well to judgments on demurrer, where such judgments go to the merits of the case. *Gould v. Evansville & C. R. Co.*, 91 U. S. 526; *Bissell v. Spring Valley Township*, 124 U. S. 225; *City of Los Angeles v. Mellus*, 59 Cal. 444; *Gregory v. Woodworth*, 107 Ia. 151; *Rodman v. Michigan C. R. Co.*, 59 Mich. 397. But a judgment on a demurrer, which is based on a technical defect of pleading, a lack of jurisdiction, misjoinder of parties, or the like, does not involve the merits of the controversy, and is not available as *res judicata*. *House v. Mullen*, 22 Wall. (U. S.) 42; *Sivers v. Sivers*, 97 Cal. 518; *Roberts v. Hamilton*, 56 Ia. 683. When a plea of *res judicata* is interposed, the controlling question is whether the judgment offered to support it is based on the merits of the controversy. If it is, it is conclusive and forecloses further investigation. Applying that test to the present case, we do not think the judgment of the court of appeals in *Bailey v. Mosher*, *supra*, supports the plea of *res judicata*. It does not dispose of the action for deceit on its merits, but on the technical ground that, by the averment of mere conclusions of law, the plaintiff had committed himself to the theory that the action was of a different character, and precluded an examination of the merits of his action for deceit.

As to the other plaintiffs, it is insisted that they are concluded by the judgments of dismissal rendered in the respective cases by the federal court. It will be remembered that in all of those cases, save that brought by Bailey, the dismissal was on the motion of the plaintiffs, and before the trial of any issue of law or fact. A dismissal, under such circumstances, does not operate as an estoppel, and is no bar to another action. Section 430 of the code seems to embody the prevailing doctrine in regard to a voluntary dismissal, and provides, among other things, that an action may be dismissed by the plaintiff, before a final submission of the cause to the jury, without prejudice to a future action. See *Beals v. Western Union*

Telegraph Co., 53 Neb. 601; *Bank of Maywood v. Estate of McAllister*, 56 Neb. 188; *Harrison v. Hartford Fire Ins. Co.*, 112 Ia. 77. That the costs had not been paid in the cases voluntarily dismissed does not estop the plaintiffs to prosecute these actions. So far as our practice is concerned, the most that can be said of the common law rule, making the payment of costs in the former action a prerequisite to the prosecution of another, is that it is one which the trial court, in the exercise of a sound discretion, may or may not apply. *Union P. R. Co. v. Mertes*, 35 Neb. 204. The record shows no abuse of discretion in this instance.

It is next contended by the defendants that these cases were prosecuted on the theory that they were actions for misfeasance and mismanagement. The record does not sustain that contention. It is true there is a large amount of evidence in the record tending to establish misfeasance and mismanagement of the affairs of the bank by the defendants. But this evidence was not introduced for the purpose of proving such facts, but was, in most instances, inseparably connected with evidence tending to establish an action for deceit. That the court tried the cases as actions for deceit is clearly shown, we think, by an instruction following the statement of the issues, in which the jury were instructed that the burden of proof was on the plaintiffs to establish the allegations contained in their several petitions, closing with these words: "In other words, the burden is upon the plaintiffs severally to show that the defendants severally published, or caused to be published, or participated in the publication of, the statements of the condition of the Capital National Bank; * * * that the plaintiffs, each for himself, relied upon the truth of said statements; * * * that such statements were untrue."

It is earnestly contended by the defendants that the verdicts are not sustained by sufficient evidence. The evidence makes up three large volumes, and it is impossible to discuss it, save in the most general way, with-

out extending this opinion to undue length. It was incumbent on the plaintiffs to establish by a preponderance of the evidence: (1) That the defendants published the statements purporting to show the financial condition of the Capital National Bank or participated in the publication thereof; (2) That such statements were false; (3) That the plaintiffs severally relied upon such statements, and believed them to be true, and were thereby misled to their injury.

As to the first proposition, the evidence shows that none of the statements were actually made by all the defendants, but that each defendant participated in making some of them. It is urged on behalf of the defendant Thompson that he participated in making but one of them. That is a mistake. The evidence is conclusive that he signed and participated in making at least four of them; the first being that made and published December 28, 1886; the last that made and published July 9, 1891. The mistake arises, perhaps, from the construction which the defendants seem to place on the petitions. The petitions set out two of the statements at length, but it is also alleged that at divers other times and dates, between the 28th of December, 1886, and the 21st day of January, 1893, the defendants made and published other false and misleading reports purporting to show the condition of the bank, which were relied upon by the plaintiffs. The defendants appear to take the position that plaintiffs should be restricted to the two reports set out at length. We do not think so. The allegations of the petitions are sufficiently broad to admit proof of any and all statements made on and between the dates just mentioned. If definiteness and certainty required all such statements to be set out at length, the remedy was by motion.

As to the proposition that the statements were false, the evidence involves a maze of figures and computations covering a large portion of the bill of exceptions. The defendants contend, among other things, that the only discrepancies shown by this evidence are discrepancies be-

tween the balance book of the bank and the statements, and that such discrepancies are due to the fact that the comptroller of the currency, in pursuance of his authority under the federal banking law, required a different classification of the items in such statements than that under which they were classified on the books of the bank; that the relation between the totals was not thereby disturbed; consequently, such discrepancies are immaterial. The contention is not borne out by the record. The evidence not only tends to show discrepancies between the statements and the books of the bank, but also between such statements and the actual condition of the bank when the statements were respectively made, and that such discrepancies materially disturbed the relation between the totals of the assets and liabilities of the bank, and made its condition appear better than what it actually was. In short, there is ample evidence to sustain a finding that the bank was insolvent before and during the period covered by the transactions of the plaintiffs with it; that, had the statements been made in accordance with the facts, they would have shown, notwithstanding the classification required by the comptroller of the currency, the true condition of the bank, or at least sufficient to put prospective customers upon inquiry; but, instead, they exaggerated the assets, depreciated the liabilities, and were so framed as to conceal the actual condition of the bank and convey the impression that it was not only solvent, but prosperous. In the face of these facts, no manipulation of figures or refinement of argument can make it appear that the discrepancies are immaterial, or that there is a lack of proof that the statements were false. We do not wish to be understood to say that all of the defendants knew that such statements were false. We are satisfied that such is not the case. But, as was said in *Gerner v. Mosher*, 58 Neb. 135, it was their duty to know whether the statements made by them were true, and the fact that they made and published them, without knowledge of their falsity, is no defense.

As to the proposition that the plaintiffs relied upon such statements and believed them to be true, and were thereby misled to their injury, we consider it sufficiently established by the evidence. The plaintiff Bailey testified that he had had some money to invest, and read the published statements of the different banks including those of the Capital National, in order to keep himself informed of their condition.

The following is a portion of his testimony on this point: "Q. How did you come to go to the Capital National Bank? A. I went on purpose to see what they would pay on the money. And I thought it was just as good as the First National. Q. What information did you have as to the condition of the Capital National Bank? A. As soon as I went in they handed me a card, and the directors and stockholders of the bank were on that card. And I took the papers several years previous. Q. What papers? A. The Semiweekly Journal, I believe, and the Call. Q. What did you see? A. I saw the bank was in good circumstances, as I supposed, the way the amount of assets read in the published statements. Q. Well, what did you read in those papers—published statements? A. Yes, in the published statements in the paper. Q. Of what bank? A. The Capital National Bank of Lincoln, Nebraska. Q. State when it was, with reference to the time. A. I suppose ever since the bank started, for I read the papers every day, and took particular notice. I had some money to loan out, and I took a little notice where I thought was the best place to put it. Q. And what reliance did you make, if any, upon these statements? A. Well, that was all the reliance I had was what I could get information in the papers in regard to the standing of the bank. Q. State what information, if any, you had, other than what was disclosed in the statements that were published. A. That was all the information I had. Q. You may state where you got your information as to the condition of this bank. A. I got it from the published statements. Q. And from any other source? A. No, sir, I had no other source

to get it from. Q. State what effect those published statements had upon your transacting business at the Capital National Bank, if any. A. Why, that is all the effect I had to go by was the published statement, supposing it was to be true and correct. Q. Did you believe it to be true? A. I believed it to be true or I wouldn't have put my money there, I would have kept it where it was. Q. Now, you may state if you knew at any time, or had any means of knowing, that the Capital National Bank * * * was not financially in the condition as represented in the condition as represented by its statements. A. I had no means of knowing. Q. Well, did you have any knowledge? A. I had no knowledge. Q. State what belief, if any, you put in those statements prior to the time you deposited your money in the bank. A. I believed the statements to be true, or I never would have put my money in the bank. That is sure."

Cross-examination—"Q. And there was no bank in Lincoln, or in the state that you knew of, that stood higher in the general estimation than it? A. Not in my own mind according to their statement. I don't think there was any in Lincoln, anyway."

His evidence, fairly construed, sufficiently shows that he relied upon the false statements, believed them to be true, and, consequently, that the bank was safe; that, acting in that belief and influenced by it, he transferred his business to such bank. It is true, his evidence shows that he was influenced somewhat by the higher rate of interest this bank was paying. But it is well settled that, where a false statement is relied upon and is a material inducement, it is immaterial that other causes contributed to influence the conduct of the injured party. *Runge v. Brown*, 23 Neb. 817; *Foley v. Holtry*, 43 Neb. 133; *Olcott v. Bolton*, 50 Neb. 779; *Sioux Nat. Bank. v. Norfolk State Bank*, 56 Fed. 139. The evidence adduced on behalf of the other plaintiffs on this point is stronger than that adduced by Bailey, and is sufficient, we think, in each case to sustain a finding that the plaintiffs relied upon the statements, be-

City of Plattsmouth v. Murphy.

lieved them to be true, and were misled thereby to their injury.

We have gone over the evidence in this case with some care, fully alive to the liability of the jurors to draw wrong inferences in cases of this character, owing to the lack of time and facilities to consider and weigh the mass of evidence introduced, and are thoroughly satisfied that every fact essential to a recovery in these cases is sufficiently sustained by the evidence. We have also gone over the several errors assigned, and have examined them in the light of exhaustive briefs and luminous oral arguments of the learned gentlemen representing the respective parties, but have found no reversible error.

It is therefore recommended that the several judgments be affirmed.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the said judgments and each of them are

AFFIRMED.

CITY OF PLATTSMOUTH V. HUGH MURPHY.

FILED OCTOBER 19, 1905. No. 13,332.

1. **Unconstitutional Statute: AMENDMENT.** An act of the legislature amendatory of, or supplemental to, an unconstitutional law is unconstitutional and void, and chapter 14, laws 1887, being amendatory of, and supplemental to, chapter 14, laws 1885, which has been held unconstitutional and void, is also invalid.
2. **Cities: CONTRACTS: RATIFICATION.** A contract entered into by a city in violation of a mandatory provision of its charter is void, and can be ratified only by an observance of the conditions essential to a valid agreement in the first instance.
3. **The maxim, *Ignorantia juris neminem excusat*, applied.**

ERROR to the district court for Cass county: PAUL JESSEN, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

H. D. Travis and J. L. Root, for plaintiff in error.

Matthew Gering, contra.

ALBERT, C.

This action was brought to recover the balance due on an alleged written contract between the city of Plattsmouth and one Fanning for the paving of certain streets of that city. The work was performed and accepted by the city, and, by the terms of the contract, the amount due the contractor therefor was \$7,628.38. Of this amount the city paid \$7,097.06, but afterwards refused to pay the balance. Fanning assigned his claim for the balance to the plaintiff. There was a verdict for the plaintiff, and from a judgment rendered thereon the city brings the case here on error.

Among other defenses, it is urged that the contract is void, because it was made in violation of certain mandatory provisions of the charter under which the city was acting at the time the contract was made. Among other violations relied upon to defeat the action is that no estimate of the cost of the improvement had ever been made and submitted to the city council by the city engineer, as required by law, before the contract was made. The evidence shows a history of the contract and of the preliminary steps leading up to its execution. We have gone over this evidence with care, and it is clear and convincing that no estimate of the cost of the improvement in question was ever made and submitted to the council by the city engineer before the contract was made.

This brings us at once to the question whether the making of such estimates and their submission to the city council were prerequisites to a valid exercise of the power of the city to make the contract, and to determine that question it is necessary to consider the provisions of the charter under which the city was acting at the time, so far as such provisions relate to the matter in hand. The

contract was made in 1892, and at that time the city had more than 5,000, but less than 10,000 inhabitants—a fact which stands admitted of record. In 1879 an act was passed and approved, entitled “An act to provide for the organization, government, and powers of cities and villages,” which provided that all cities and villages containing more than 1,500 and less than 15,000 inhabitants should be governed thereby. Laws 1879, p. 193. In 1883 there was passed and approved “An act to provide for the organization, government, and powers of cities of the second class having more than ten thousand inhabitants.” Laws 1883, ch. 16. As the defendant city then, as now, had less than 10,000 inhabitants, it was not affected by this act. In 1885 the legislature undertook to amend the title to the act of 1883 in such a way as to include cities of the second class having over 5,000 inhabitants. The title to the act is “An act to amend the title and sections 1, 2, 3 and 4, of an act entitled ‘An act to provide for the organization, government, and powers of cities of the second class having more than ten thousand inhabitants.’” Laws 1885, ch. 14. This act was held void in *Webster v. City of Hastings*, 59 Neb. 563. Consequently, the powers and duties of the defendant city are to be determined without regard to this act. In 1887 an act was passed entitled “An act to amend sections 27 and 58, and to add subdivisions XVIII and LIX to section 52, of article II, of chapter 14, of the Compiled Statutes relating to ‘cities of the second class,’ having over five thousand (5,000) inhabitants, and to repeal said original sections 27 and 58 and all acts and parts of acts in conflict with this act.” Laws 1887, ch. 14. This act clearly refers to the act of 1885, because there was no other act relating to cities having over 5,000 inhabitants. As we have seen, the act of 1885 was held unconstitutional and void, and it necessarily follows that all acts amendatory or supplemental thereto must fall with it. With the defendant city excluded from the act of 1883, because of having less than 10,000 inhabitants, and the acts of 1885

and 1887 unconstitutional and void, the act of 1879 is the act to which we must look to determine whether the lack of estimates of the cost of the improvement in question is fatal to the contract. Section 20 of the act of 1879, *supra*, so far as material at present, is as follows: "Before the city council shall make any contract for building bridges or sidewalks, or for any work on the streets, or for any other work or improvement, an estimate of the cost thereof shall be made by the city engineer and submitted to the council, and no contract shall be entered into for any work or improvement for a price exceeding such estimate; and in advertising for bids for any such work the council shall cause the amount of such estimate to be published therewith." Construing substantially the same provision, in *Fulton v. City of Lincoln*, 9 Neb. 358, this court held that the power of the city council to bind the city by contract would depend, among other things, upon an estimate having been first made and submitted by the city engineer. The provision requiring such estimate is clearly mandatory, and it is well settled that a contract of a city made in violation of a mandatory provision of its charter is *ultra vires* and void. *Gutta Percha & Rubber Mfg. Co. v. Village of Ogalalla*, 40 Neb. 775; *City of Kearney v. Downing*, 59 Neb. 549; *Ottawa v. Carey*, 108 U. S. 110; *Lewis v. Shreveport*, 108 U. S. 282; *Smith v. Newburgh*, 77 N. Y. 130.

It is claimed that the city afterwards ratified the contract. In *Gutta Percha & Rubber Mfg. Co. v. Village of Ogalalla*, *supra*, in disposing of a like claim, Mr. Justice Post said:

"If a contract is invalid when made, because in violation of some mandatory requirement of statute, it will be deemed *ultra vires*, and can be ratified only upon the conditions essential to a valid agreement in the first instance," citing a long list of cases in support of his position. The mandatory provisions of the charter were not complied with in this case in the first instance, nor does the record disclose anything remotely approaching a subsequent

compliance therewith, which would bring the case within the rule with respect to the ratification of an invalid contract, as just stated. In the same case the learned judge used the following language, which has our unqualified approval: "It is the recognized doctrine that whoever contracts with a municipality must, at his peril, take notice of the powers conferred by its charter and whether the proposed indebtedness is in excess of the limitations imposed thereby. *Hodges v. City of Buffalo*, 2 Denio (N. Y.), 110; *Lowell Five Cents Savings Bank v. Inhabitants of Winchester*, 8 Allen (Mass.), 109; *People v. May*, 9 Colo. 80; *Law v. People*, 87 Ill. 385; *French v. City of Burlington*, 42 Ia. 614. As said in the case last named, 'any other rule leaves the taxpayer at the mercy of the officers of the city and contractor, and would render the constitutional provision nugatory. Such a result cannot be contemplated or allowed to prevail.' And if a recovery is sanctioned upon a contract like this, on the ground that it has been subsequently ratified, surely legislative restriction upon corporate powers is in vain. It would then be within the power of willing or corrupt officers to accomplish by indirection that which is prohibited in the most explicit terms of the statute or charter. There may be cases in which considerations of equity and good faith will impose upon a municipal corporation the duty of returning property, or its equivalent, where an action would not lie upon contract, express or implied. That question is, however, not presented by the record of this case and is not decided."

It is claimed by the plaintiff that the parties to the contract proceeded on the theory that the acts of 1885 and 1887, *supra*, were valid, and, if we understand the argument on this point, that plaintiff's rights should be measured by those acts. In the first place, it is by no means clear that he would be in any better plight if those acts, or either of them, were to be taken as the measure of his rights. But it would be unprofitable to go into that question. *Ignorantia juris neminem excusat* is a maxim sanc-

Ruby v. Pierce.

tioned by centuries of experience. That it makes a hardship in individual instances is a matter of common knowledge; but is of little importance, when compared with the evils which would result from measuring the rights of a litigant, not by the law as it is, but by the law as he understands it to be.

It is recommended that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings according to law.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings according to law.

REVERSED.

DANIEL G. RUBY V. JESSE E. PIERCE ET AL.

FILED OCTOBER 19, 1905. No. 13,931.

Judgment: PROCESS: SERVICE. An officer's return to a summons, showing service by leaving at the "last" usual place of residence of the defendant, does not show a compliance with the statute authorizing service by leaving a copy at the usual residence of the defendant, and a judgment based thereon is void for want of jurisdiction.

ERROR to the district court for Gage county: WILLIAM H. KELLIGAR, JUDGE. Reversed.

L. W. Colby, for plaintiff in error.

Hazlett & Jack, contra.

ALBERT, C.

This action was for the recovery of damages for breach of warranty in the sale of an animal for breeding purposes. A summons duly issued, and the officer's return

Ruby v. Pierce.

thereto is as follows: "April 10, 1903, Summons returned, indorsed: Received this writ on the 31st day of March, A. D. 1903, and on the 9th day of April, A. D. 1903, after diligent search, and being unable to find the within named D. G. Ruby in Gage county, I left a true and certified copy of the within summons at his last usual place of residence of the said D. G. Ruby. All done in Gage county, Nebraska. Witness my hand this 10th day of April, A. D. 1903. Fees, 85c. W. A. Waddington, Sheriff, By V. E. McGirr, Deputy."

The defendant made no appearance, and judgment by default was taken by the plaintiffs. Afterwards, at the same term, the defendant entered a special appearance, objecting to the jurisdiction of the court. These objections were overruled, and the defendant brings the record here for review on error.

It will be observed that the return to the summons does not show actual service on the defendant, but that service was made, or attempted, by leaving a copy of the writ at his "last" usual place of residence. In our opinion, the service is not merely irregular, but absolutely void. The statute permits service by leaving a copy of the summons "at the usual place of residence" of the defendant. Code, sec. 69. His usual place of residence is his place of abode at the time of service. *Blodgett v. Utley*, 4 Neb. 25; *Seymour v. Street*, 5 Neb. 88. "The words 'residence' and 'usual place of residence,' as employed in statutes, are generally synonymous with the term 'domicile,' hence the residence essential to confer jurisdiction is a legal one equivalent to the domicile of the defendant. The domicile of a defendant is that place where he has his fixed and permanent home, and to which, when absent, he has the intention of returning." *Wood v. Roeder*, 45 Neb. 311. It is clear that such home must be his present home, as distinguished from a past or prospective home. In the return of the sheriff the phrase "usual place of residence" is qualified by the word "last." It will be presumed that in making this qualification the officer acted advisedly. The

Ruby v. Pierce.

return as thus qualified conveys the thought, not that a copy of the writ was left at the present residence of the defendant, but at some place at which the defendant had formerly resided or made his home. *Madison County Bank v. Suman*, 79 Mo. 527. It seems to us that the qualifying word as used in the return serves no purpose, save to distinguish between a past and present place of abode.

It is urged that all presumptions are in favor of the action of the trial court, and that its proceedings should be liberally construed according to our code. The office of the liberal spirit which pervades the code is to insure a speedy hearing on the merits, and to that end to ignore purely technical omissions not affecting the substantial rights of the parties. But the right of a party to his day in court and to an opportunity to be heard are substantial rights, and where, as in this case, instead of actual personal service, the plaintiff relies on a substitute therefor of doubtful sufficiency to apprise the defendant of the pendency of the suit, it is not an application of any technical rule to hold that such substituted service, to be valid, must be made in the manner prescribed by statute. Such service, at best, is calculated to work hardship and injustice. The statute authorizing it can be justified only on the ground of necessity, and should not be extended beyond the plain import of its terms, nor to cases where the language of the return is doubtful or ambiguous.

It is recommended that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings according to law.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings according to law.

REVERSED.

NICHOLAS V. HALTER ET AL. V. STATE OF NEBRASKA.*

FILED OCTOBER 19, 1905. No. 13,955.

1. **Legislative Power: USE OF FLAG.** The power to prohibit the use of the national flag does not belong exclusively to the federal congress, but may be exercised by the several states.
2. **Constitutional Law.** Chapter 139, laws 1903, entitled "An act to prevent and punish the desecration of the flag of the United States" is not obnoxious to the fourteenth amendment to the constitution of the United States, nor to the provisions of the state constitution against depriving any person of his property without due process of law, and against special or class legislation.
3. **Police Power.** Notwithstanding the fourteenth amendment to the federal constitution, the state in the exercise of the police power may enact such laws as are calculated to promote the health, comfort, safety and welfare of society, although such laws operate to restrict the liberty of citizens of the United States.
4. **Courts: CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS.** But whether legislation thus operating is in fact calculated to promote such ends is a legitimate subject of inquiry by the court, when the constitutionality of the act is assailed.
5. **Statutes: VALIDITY.** An act which is calculated to foster sentiments of patriotism is not vulnerable to the objection that it is not calculated to promote the welfare of society.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: EDMUND M. BARTLETT, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

Cooper & Dunn and S. R. Rush, for plaintiffs in error.

Frank N. Prout, Attorney General, and Norris Brown, contra.

ALBERT, C.

The defendant was convicted of a violation of the statute entitled "An act to prevent and punish the desecration of the flag of the United States." Laws 1903, ch. 139.

It is conclusively established that the defendants were

* Affirmed, 205 U. S. 34.

engaged in selling intoxicating liquors at retail, and sold and offered for sale beer contained in bottles, to which was attached a label on which there was printed a representation of the flag of the United States, and that such label was so used to advertise the beer and distinguish it from other products of a like nature. It is admitted that the beer was sold to the defendants by a brewing company in the bottles thus labeled, and that the representation of the flag thereon is a part of the registered trade mark of the brewing company. It is now claimed that the statute under which the defendants were convicted is unconstitutional, and consequently that the judgment of conviction must be reversed. The statute is as follows:

Section 1. "Any person who in any manner, for exhibition or display, shall place, or cause to be placed, any word, figure, mark, picture, design, drawing, or any advertisement of any nature, upon any flag, standard, color, or ensign, of the United States of America, or shall expose or cause to be exposed to public view any such flag, standard, color, or ensign, upon which shall be printed, painted, or otherwise placed, or to which shall be attached, appended, affixed, or annexed, any word, figure, mark, picture, design or drawing, or any advertisement of any nature, or who shall expose to public view, manufacture, sell, expose for sale, give away, or have in possession for sale, or to give away or for use for any purpose, any article, or substance, being an article of merchandise, or a receptacle of merchandise upon which shall have been printed, painted, attached, or otherwise placed, a representation of any such flag, standard, color, or ensign, to advertise, call attention to, decorate, mark, or distinguish, the article, or substance on which so placed, or who shall publicly mutilate, deface, defile, or defy, trample upon, or cast contempt, either by words or act, upon any such flag, standard, color, or ensign, shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be punished by a fine not exceeding one hundred dollars, or by imprison-

ment for not more than thirty days, or both, in the discretion of the court."

Section 2. "The words flag, color, ensign, as used in this act shall include any flag, standard, ensign, or any picture or representation, or either thereof, made of any substance, or represented on any substance, and of any size, evidently purporting to be, either of, said flag, standard, color or ensign, of the United States of America, or a picture, or a representation, of either thereof, upon which shall be shown the colors, the stars, and the stripes, in any number of either thereof, or by which the person seeing the same, without deliberation may believe the same to represent the flag, color, standard, or ensign, of the United States of America."

Section 3. "This act shall not apply to any act permitted by the statutes of the United States of America or by the United States army and navy regulations, nor shall it be construed to apply to a newspaper, periodical, book, pamphlet, circular, certificate, diploma, warrant, or commission of appointment to office, ornamental picture, article of jewelry, or stationery for use in correspondence, on any of which shall be printed, painted, or placed, said flag, disconnected from any advertisement."

The defendants take the position that the act contravenes section 1 of the fourteenth amendment to the federal constitution, which prohibits the states from making or enforcing any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States, or which shall deprive any person of life, liberty or property without due process of law, and the provisions of the state constitution against special or class legislation. This position is supported by two cases. *Ruhstrat v. People*, 185 Ill. 133, 49 L. R. A. 181, and *People v. Van De Carr*, 178 N. Y. 428, 70 N. E. 965. In each of these cases a statute substantially like the one under consideration was held unconstitutional. The Illinois case rests on three propositions, which for convenience we shall consider out of the order in which they are there discussed.

As to the first, namely, that the act is unconstitutional, "as depriving a citizen of the United States of the right of exercising a privilege impliedly, if not expressly, granted to him by the federal constitution," little need be said. The right to advertise whiskey, beer, tobacco and other articles of merchandise by the use of the national flag is certainly not the subject of an express constitutional grant, and it can be said to be impliedly granted only in the sense that, like an infinite number of other acts, it is not prohibited. If the fact that an act or course of action is not prohibited by the federal constitution gives a citizen of the United States a right which the state is powerless to abridge or restrict, the sphere of state legislation is more circumscribed than has been generally supposed, and our criminal code is largely waste paper. A moment's reflection would seem sufficient to show that the proposition is utterly unsound. Nor can we agree with counsel that the federal government has the exclusive power to regulate the use of the national flag. It is not infrequent that the same act is an offense against both the state and federal governments. Counterfeiting furnishes an apt illustration. The power "to provide for the punishment of counterfeiting the securities and current coin of the United States" is expressly given to congress, but the offense is also punishable under the laws of the several states, the validity of which was upheld in *Fox v. State*; 5 How. (U. S.) 410.

The second proposition to be noticed is that "the act is also unduly discriminating and partial in its character." This proposition is based on the exceptions to the general provisions of the act. The exceptions enumerated in the Illinois act are fewer than in our own, but we do not think it can fairly be said that in either case they render the act unduly discriminating or partial. Neither act is aimed against any individual or class of individuals, but against certain acts. If it were competent for the legislature to deal with the subject, it was clearly competent for it to define the crime of desecration, and to specify

the acts constituting the offense. Every use of the flag not included in such definition or specification would be impliedly excepted from the operation of the act, and it would seem wholly immaterial that the legislature saw fit to make some acts the subject of an express exception, instead of narrowing the definition of the crime, or the specification of the acts constituting it, in such a way as to exclude the acts included in such exception. Besides, there is nothing in the state or federal constitution which forbids the classification of subjects for legislation, so long as the classification is not arbitrary. *Lancashire Ins. Co. v. Bush*, 60 Neb. 116, and cases cited. There this court held that the statute providing for the taxing of an attorney's fee against a defeated insurance company was valid legislation. See also *Rosenbloom v. State*, 64 Neb. 342; *State v. Montgomery*, 92 Me. 433, 43 Atl. 13; *Ex parte Thornton*, 12 Fed. 538; *Davis v. State*, 51 Neb. 301. In this instance, the classification does not appear to be an arbitrary, but a most natural one. It is a matter of common knowledge that the use of the flag for advertising purposes offends the sensibilities of a large portion of our people. The statute is directed against the use of the flag for that purpose, but excepts from its provisions certain uses to which the most sensitive could not object. Without such exception, either express or implied, the statute would be oppressive, if not absurd.

We come now to the remaining proposition on which the Illinois case rests, namely, that the statute is an infringement upon the personal liberty guaranteed by the state and federal constitutions. The court in that case recognizes the right of the state, in the exercise of its police power, to enact such laws as are calculated to promote the health, comfort, safety and welfare of society, although such laws may operate as an infringement upon the personal liberty of the citizen, but holds that such laws must be in fact calculated to promote those objects, or some of them; otherwise, they are an arbitrary restraint on the citizen and unconstitutional. Such is the gen-

erally accepted doctrine. *Lochner v. New York*, 198 U. S. 45, 25 Sup. Ct. Rep. 539, contains a discussion of the police power of the states, and an examination of many cases bearing on the subject. After a somewhat lengthy discussion of the doctrine just referred to, the court in *Ruhstrat v. People*, *supra*, held that the statute was not calculated to promote any of the objects just enumerated, and was therefore unconstitutional and void. Again, we find ourselves unable to agree with a court to whose opinions, ordinarily, we attach great weight. Patriotism has ever been regarded as the highest civic virtue, and whatever tends to foster that virtue certainly makes for the common good. That familiarity breeds contempt has the force of a maxim. That contempt or disrespect for an emblem begets a like state of mind toward that for which it stands is a psychological law which underlies the canons against profanation which abound in every system of religious instruction. Such inhibitions against the irreverent use of sacred things are not mere arbitrary fulminations, but are grounded on sound practical considerations and the conviction that such use of the sacred emblems of religion is inimical to the cause of religion itself. The legislation under consideration may be justified on the same principle. The flag is the emblem of national authority. To the citizen it is an object of patriotic adoration, emblematic of all for which his country stands—her institutions, her achievements, her long roster of heroic dead, the story of her past, the promise of her future; and it is not fitting that it should become associated in his mind with anything less exalted, nor that it should be put to any mean or ignoble use.

Moreover, that the citizen resents any improper use of the flag of his country, and that his resentment is frequently carried to the extent of a breach of the peace, are matters of common knowledge. The state has the undoubted right to legislate in the interest of the public peace. As was said in *Updegraph v. Commonwealth*, 11 Serg. & Rawl. (Pa.) 406:

"An offense against the public peace may consist either of an actual breach of the peace, or doing that which tends to provoke and excite others to do it. Within the latter description fall all acts and all attempts to produce disorder, by written, printed, or oral communications, for the purpose of generally weakening those religious and moral restraints, without the aid of which mere legislative provisions would prove ineffectual."

The doctrine announced in that case seems peculiarly applicable to the case in hand, and to justify the act in question as a valid exercise of the police power of the state. In *People v. Van De Carr*, *supra*, the act was not held wholly void, but only in so far as it applies to articles manufactured and in existence when the act went into effect. To that extent it was held unconstitutional as in contravention of the constitutional provision that no person shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law. If the statute is vulnerable to that objection, it would seem that a large number of our penal statutes, commonly regarded as valid, must fall by the same rule. When our act against taking fish with a seine went into effect, there were doubtless many seines manufactured and in existence. The same may be said of swivel guns, when the act making it unlawful to kill certain wild water-fowl with such guns became a law. But to our knowledge it has never been seriously claimed that either of such acts is unconstitutional and void to the extent that it applies to "articles manufactured and in existence when the act went into effect." By sweeping prohibitory legislation, those engaged in the manufacture and sale of intoxicating liquors were put out of business in the state of Kansas, and property whose chief value consisted in its use in connection with the manufacture and sale of such liquors was rendered practically valueless. The validity of this legislation was assailed on the ground that it operated to deprive those engaged in the traffic in intoxicating liquors of their property without due process of law. *Mugler v. Kansas*, 123 U. S. 623. Considering that feature of the case, the court said:

"Lawful state legislation, in the exercise of the police powers of the state, to prohibit the manufacture and sale within the state of spirituous, malt, vinous, fermented, or other intoxicating liquors, to be used as a beverage, may be enforced against persons who, at the time, happen to own property whose chief value consists in its fitness for such manufacturing purposes, without compensating them for the diminution in its value resulting from such prohibitory enactments."

Nor does the fact that the flag was a part of the trade-mark of the brewing company place the defendants in any more favorable position. To the extent that the trade-mark is property, it comes within what has already been said. A patent or trade-mark puts no restraint upon the state in the exercise of its police power beyond the restraint imposed with respect to property generally. *Patterson v. Kentucky*, 97 U. S. 507.

We have gone over the act in the light of excellent briefs on either side and have reached the conclusion that it is not only a valid piece of legislation, but one well calculated to promote the common weal.

It is therefore recommended that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur. .

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

OMAHA STREET RAILWAY COMPANY V. JOHN BOESEN.

FILED OCTOBER 19, 1905. No. 14,250.

1. **Street Railways: ACTION FOR DAMAGES: BURDEN OF PROOF.** In an action against a street railway company for damages for injuries sustained by one of its passengers, the burden of proof on the question of negligence does not shift to the defendant upon proof that the injuries resulted from a derailment of the car.

Omaha Street R. Co. v. Boesen.

2. **Negligence: PRESUMPTION: EVIDENCE.** In such case a presumption of negligence arises from the fact of derailment, but when that presumption is met by evidence which makes it equally probable that the accident was not due to negligence on the part of the defendant, in the absence of other evidence tending to establish the affirmative of the issue, the defendant is entitled to a verdict.
3. **Carriers Not Insurers.** A street railway company is not an insurer of its passengers. It is not bound to do everything that can be done to insure their safety. It fulfills its obligations in that regard when it exercises the utmost skill, diligence and foresight consistent with the practical conduct of the business in which it is engaged.
4. **Witnesses: IMPEACHMENT.** On a subsequent trial, the evidence of a deceased witness taken at a second trial cannot be impeached by showing that some of his statements on the witness-stand at the first trial are inconsistent therewith, where upon the second trial his attention was not directed to such statements, and he was given no opportunity to explain the alleged discrepancies.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: LEE S. ESTELLE, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

John L. Webster and W. J. Connell, for plaintiff in error.

T. W. Blackburn and R. S. Horton, contra.

ALBERT, C.

This is an action wherein the plaintiff seeks to recover for personal injuries alleged to have been sustained by reason of the negligence of the defendant. It is alleged in the petition that, while the plaintiff was a passenger on one of the cars operated by the defendant on its street railway, such car, by reason of certain negligent acts and omissions of the defendant, was derailed, and, in consequence, the plaintiff was thrown violently therefrom, and thereby sustained serious and permanent bodily injuries. These allegations are put in issue by the answer, which also charges the plaintiff with contributory negligence. The reply con-

"Lawful state legislation, in the exercise of the police powers of the state, to prohibit the manufacture and sale within the state of spirituous, malt, vinous, fermented, or other intoxicating liquors, to be used as a beverage, may be enforced against persons who, at the time, happen to own property whose chief value consists in its fitness for such manufacturing purposes, without compensating them for the diminution in its value resulting from such prohibitory enactments."

Nor does the fact that the flag was a part of the trade-mark of the brewing company place the defendants in any more favorable position. To the extent that the trade-mark is property, it comes within what has already been said. A patent or trade-mark puts no restraint upon the state in the exercise of its police power beyond the restraint imposed with respect to property generally. *Patterson v. Kentucky*, 97 U. S. 507.

We have gone over the act in the light of excellent briefs on either side and have reached the conclusion that it is not only a valid piece of legislation, but one well calculated to promote the common weal.

It is therefore recommended that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

OMAHA STREET RAILWAY COMPANY V. JOHN BOESEN.

FILED OCTOBER 19, 1905. No. 14,250.

1. **Street Railways: ACTION FOR DAMAGES: BURDEN OF PROOF.** In an action against a street railway company for damages for injuries sustained by one of its passengers, the burden of proof on the question of negligence does not shift to the defendant upon proof that the injuries resulted from a derailment of the car.

Omaha Street R. Co. v. Boesen.

2. **Negligence: PRESUMPTION: EVIDENCE.** In such case a presumption of negligence arises from the fact of derailment, but when that presumption is met by evidence which makes it equally probable that the accident was not due to negligence on the part of the defendant, in the absence of other evidence tending to establish the affirmative of the issue, the defendant is entitled to a verdict.
3. **Carriers Not Insurers.** A street railway company is not an insurer of its passengers. It is not bound to do everything that can be done to insure their safety. It fulfills its obligations in that regard when it exercises the utmost skill, diligence and foresight consistent with the practical conduct of the business in which it is engaged.
4. **Witnesses: IMPEACHMENT.** On a subsequent trial, the evidence of a deceased witness taken at a second trial cannot be impeached by showing that some of his statements on the witness-stand at the first trial are inconsistent therewith, where upon the second trial his attention was not directed to such statements, and he was given no opportunity to explain the alleged discrepancies.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: LEE S. ESTELLE, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

John L. Webster and W. J. Connell, for plaintiff in error.

T. W. Blackburn and R. S. Horton, contra.

ALBERT, C.

This is an action wherein the plaintiff seeks to recover for personal injuries alleged to have been sustained by reason of the negligence of the defendant. It is alleged in the petition that, while the plaintiff was a passenger on one of the cars operated by the defendant on its street railway, such car, by reason of certain negligent acts and omissions of the defendant, was derailed, and, in consequence, the plaintiff was thrown violently therefrom, and thereby sustained serious and permanent bodily injuries. These allegations are put in issue by the answer, which also charges the plaintiff with contributory negligence. The reply con-

"Lawful state legislation, in the exercise of the police powers of the state, to prohibit the manufacture and sale within the state of spirituous, malt, vinous, fermented, or other intoxicating liquors, to be used as a beverage, may be enforced against persons who, at the time, happen to own property whose chief value consists in its fitness for such manufacturing purposes, without compensating them for the diminution in its value resulting from such prohibitory enactments."

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ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: LEE S. ESTELLE, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

John L. Webster and W. J. Connell, for plaintiff in error.

T. W. Blackburn and R. S. Horton, contra.

ALBERT, C.

This is an action wherein the plaintiff seeks to recover for personal injuries alleged to have been sustained by reason of the negligence of the defendant. It is alleged in the petition that, while the plaintiff was a passenger on one of the cars operated by the defendant on its street railway, such car, by reason of certain negligent acts and omissions of the defendant, was derailed, and, in consequence, the plaintiff was thrown violently therefrom, and thereby sustained serious and permanent bodily injuries. These allegations are put in issue by the answer, which also charges the plaintiff with contributory negligence. The reply con-

Omaha Street R. Co. v. Boesen.

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It is therefore recommended that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

OMAHA STREET RAILWAY COMPANY V. JOHN BOESEN.

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ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: LEE S. ESTELLE, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

John L. Webster and W. J. Connell, for plaintiff in error.

T. W. Blackburn and R. S. Horton, contra.

ALBERT, C.

This is an action wherein the plaintiff seeks to recover for personal injuries alleged to have been sustained by reason of the negligence of the defendant. It is alleged in the petition that, while the plaintiff was a passenger on one of the cars operated by the defendant on its street railway, such car, by reason of certain negligent acts and omissions of the defendant, was derailed, and, in consequence, the plaintiff was thrown violently therefrom, and thereby sustained serious and permanent bodily injuries. These allegations are put in issue by the answer, which also charges the plaintiff with contributory negligence. The reply con-

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Weckerly v. Taylor.

only because he has failed to show that he requires the evidence for the protection of any legal right, but also because, if he had intended to appeal, he had a plain, speedy and adequate remedy in the ordinary course of law.

It is recommended that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

JAMES M. WECKERLY, APPELLEE, v. CADET TAYLOR ET AL.,
APPELLANTS.

FILED OCTOBER 19, 1905. No. 13,941.

Witnesses: COMPETENCY. In an action against a married woman, where the proceeding is adversary, her husband is not a competent witness against her, and a judgment against her in such proceeding, unsupported by competent evidence other than that of the husband, where the evidence of the husband was received over the objection of the wife, will be reversed.

APPEAL from the district court for Douglas county:
ABRAHAM L. SUTTON, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

G. W. Shields and Greene, Breckenridge & Kinsler, for appellants.

A. C. Wakeley, contra.

JACKSON, C.

On February 20, 1904, James M. Weckerly, appellee herein, filed a petition in the district court for Douglas county against Cadet Taylor, Emma L. Taylor and the Employers Liability Assurance Corporation, appellants herein. Omitting the formal parts of the petition, it was alleged, in substance, that on March 30, 1901, the plaintiff

Weckerly v. Taylor.

recovered a judgment against the defendant, Cadet Taylor, upon which there was then due \$1,808.79; that execution had been issued and returned unsatisfied as to the amount stated; that the judgment debtors were insolvent and unable to pay their debts; that on the 15th day of May, 1903, the defendant, Cadet Taylor, purchased and received from the defendant, the Employers Liability Assurance Corporation, a certain combination policy of accident insurance in the principal sum of \$10,000; that on July 7, 1903, while the policy was in force, Taylor sustained an accident, and thereby became entitled to receive from said company a money indemnity of \$50 a week, weekly, so long as he should be incapacitated or disabled from carrying on his customary avocation; that from the time of the accident he had been, and then was, prevented from transacting his regular business by reason of such accident, and was entitled to receive the sum of \$50 weekly from the time of the accident, and would be entitled to receive the same during the continuance of his disability; that Taylor had fully complied with and performed all the conditions, stipulations and requirements of the policy, but that the insurance company had not yet paid him any of the indemnity, and was then owing the same; that the company had the said indemnity in its possession, but that Taylor, in order to hinder, delay and defraud his creditors, and especially the plaintiff, had, without consideration, pretended to assign and transfer his rights under the policy and the moneys due him thereunder to his wife, Emma L. Taylor, and had executed what purported to be such a conveyance; that said pretended assignment was void, and that said money in fact belonged to the said Cadet Taylor. The prayer of the petition was that the said assignment might be decreed to be without consideration, and for the purpose of hindering, delaying and defrauding the plaintiff in the collection of his said judgment; that it might be decreed that the insurance company held said moneys in trust for the said Taylor, and that such moneys should, by the order of the court, be paid over and de-

livered to the plaintiff to be applied toward the payment of the judgment. The defendants, Cadet Taylor and Emma L. Taylor, answered, denying such allegations of the petition as were not specifically admitted. It was alleged that, if Cadet Taylor had any interest in the policy of insurance, he had assigned the same to the said Emma L. Taylor. It was further alleged that the policy of insurance was, by agreement between the defendants, entirely for the benefit of the defendant, Emma L. Taylor, and that she paid the premium therefor out of her own money, and that no part of said transaction tended to hinder, delay or defraud any creditor of the said Cadet Taylor, and that it was not intended for any such purpose. It was further alleged that the said Cadet Taylor had no interest in the proceeds of the policy or in any amount of money that is due, or may become due, upon the policy. The Employers Liability Assurance Corporation answered separately, denying such allegations in the petition as were not specifically admitted. By its answer it was admitted that Taylor was insured under a policy of accident insurance; that Taylor had made no claim under said policy against the company in writing, or otherwise, as required by the terms of the policy, and that it had never been informed of the extent of his claim, if he had such claim. It neither admitted nor denied that it was indebted to Taylor, and submitted that it was not obliged to litigate the issues of liability, if any arise, between it and Taylor in that suit. There was a trial to the court, resulting in a finding for the plaintiff and against the Employers Liability Assurance Corporation for the sum of \$1,250. The defendants have brought the case to this court for review.

At the trial the defendant, Cadet Taylor, was called and sworn as a witness in behalf of the plaintiff, and, over the objection of the defendant, Emma L. Taylor, that he was not a competent witness as against her, because of the relationship of husband and wife, was permitted to testify as to the judgment having been obtained against him in favor of the appellee; as to the character of the business

Weckerly v. Taylor.

which he conducted; that he was the Cadet Taylor named in the policy of insurance; that he sustained an injury in a railroad accident, and the particulars of the accident; as to his being incapacitated on account of the injury, and the length of time during which he was so incapacitated; in fact, to all of the facts and circumstances shown at the trial tending to establish a liability in his favor and against the insurance company. And over the same objections he was permitted to testify as to the circumstances of the assignment of his interest in the policy to his wife, and the fact that no consideration was paid therefor. Without his testimony the record, as it stands, would not sustain the judgment rendered in the trial court. The appellee seeks to justify the admission of the husband's testimony on the assumption that, in an action by the wife against the company on the policy, the testimony solicited would be favorable to her interests, and that he was not, therefore, an incompetent witness in this action. We think, however, the true test is whether the proceeding in its character is an adversary one, and, if the interest of the party litigant who seeks to produce the husband's testimony is antagonistic to that of the wife, the husband should be held to be an incompetent witness in behalf of the antagonist. In this case the husband and wife are codefendants. The wife seeks no affirmative relief. Her position is purely defensive, and to hold that the husband, over the objection of the wife, should be permitted to testify against her in such a proceeding would do violence to both the letter and the spirit of the statute. Having reached that conclusion, it follows that the judgment cannot be sustained.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

REVERSED.

STATE OF NEBRASKA, EX REL. CLARK W. ADAIR, RELATOR, V.
JOHN C. DREXEL, COUNTY CLERK, RESPONDENT.

FILED NOVEMBER 11, 1905. No. 14,397.

1. **Statutes: REPEAL.** A repealing clause in an act of the legislature, to the effect that certain specified sections of an existing statute are repealed "so far as the same conflict with" the act last passed, and repealing "all acts and parts of acts in conflict herewith," only repeals such parts of existing statutes as are so repugnant to the act last passed that both cannot stand. Prior statutes are repealed *pro tanto* and to the extent only that they conflict with the act last passed.
2. **The title of the act (laws 1905, ch. 66), providing for the selection of certain candidates for public office and certain delegates at a primary election, and regulating such primary, does not embrace nor comprehend legislation concerning the registration of voters for general elections, and which is, in substance and effect, amendatory of existing registration laws.**
3. **The title to the said act is not broad enough to permit legislation concerning the form and makeup of the official ballots provided for by law to be used at a general election.**
4. **Elections: PRIMARIES: CONSTITUTIONAL LAW.** The provisions found in said primary act, limiting the right of parties to participate in a primary election and to have the names of candidates for nomination to appear on the primary ballots to those casting at least one per cent. of the total vote cast at the last election, is a reasonable classification of parties and does not conflict with the constitution guaranteeing freedom in the exercise of the elective franchise.
5. ———: ———: ———. **The provisions of the act under consideration, making the right of an elector to participate in a primary election to depend upon his party affiliation, is a legitimate exercise of legislative power, in no way conflicting with the fundamental law guaranteeing freedom in the exercise of the elective franchise.**
6. **Candidates: FILING FEES: CONSTITUTIONAL LAW.** It is not competent for the legislature to provide in a primary election law that, before a person eligible to office can be voted for at a primary and have his name appear on a primary ballot, he shall pay a fee for filing nomination papers, computed at one per cent. of the emoluments authorized by law for the office to which such candidate aspires during the term for which he would serve, if elected.

- 6a. ———: ———: ———. Such provisions are an unwarranted hindrance and impediment to the exercise of the elective franchise, and in conflict with section 22, article I of the constitution.
- 6b. Statutes: VALIDITY. "Where a statute contains provisions which are unconstitutional, if the valid and invalid are not so connected as to be incapable of separation, and the valid portion is a complete act and not dependent upon the part that is void, the latter alone will be disregarded and the rest sustained, if it is manifest that the void part was not an inducement to the legislature to pass the part which is valid." *State v. Moore*, 48 Neb. 370.
- 6c. ———: ———. The provisions of the act under consideration found to be invalid are held not to affect the remainder of the act.

ORIGINAL application for a writ of mandamus to compel respondent to file certificate of nominations and place names of candidates on election ballot. *Writ denied.*

George A. Magney, for relator.

W. W. Slabaugh and *F. W. Fitch*, contra.

HOLCOMB, C. J.

The relator alleges, in substance, that the socialist party of Douglas county, a county having a population of more than 125,000, held a nominating convention on the 1st day of August, 1905, composed of the members of that party, and nominated candidates for county offices to be voted for at the general election to be held in November following; that a certificate was duly prepared by the officers of such convention of the nominations so made in the manner required by section 129, chapter 26, Compiled Statutes, 1903 (Ann. St. 5768); that a request was made of the respondent, the county clerk of said county, to receive and file said certificate of nominations, which he refused to do, giving as a reason for such refusal that such certificate of nominations was illegal and void, because not in conformity with the primary election act passed by the legislature of 1905, known as "Senate File No. 47," providing

for the nomination of candidates for county offices by primary election in counties having a population of more than 125,000 inhabitants. The said act of the legislature is alleged to be void for several reasons, because in conflict with the paramount law. A peremptory writ of mandamus is prayed, compelling the respondent to receive and file said certificate of nominations and place the names of the candidates therein certified to upon the official ballots to be voted at the general election to be held in November, 1905. An alternative writ was issued, to which the respondent interposes a general demurrer.

The act, the validity of which is challenged, is entitled "An act to provide for primary elections in counties having a population of more than 125,000 inhabitants, and to regulate the same; to provide for the nomination of certain candidates for certain offices at such primary elections; to provide for the election of delegates to state, congressional and judicial conventions; to provide for the election of members of the state, congressional and county committees of the several political parties at such primary election; to provide penalties for the violation of the provisions of this act, and to repeal sections 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 125a, 125b, 125c, 125d, 125e, 125f, 125g, 125h, 125i, 125j, 125k, 125l, 126, 127, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, of chapter 26 of the Compiled Statutes of Nebraska for 1903, so far as the same conflicts with the provisions of this and all acts and parts of acts in conflict herewith." Laws 1905, ch. 66.

1. In determining whether the primary election law is valid, which is attacked by the relator, it seems necessary to first ascertain its general scope and effect, and how, if at all, it affects or has repealed the general laws theretofore in force providing for and regulating the nomination of candidates for public office by party conventions, and printing the names of such nominees on the official ballots to be voted at the general elections at which such offices are filled, such provisions being found in chapter 26, Compiled Statutes, 1903 (Ann. St. 5600-5868), under the title

"Elections." The act under consideration, it will be observed, applies only to counties of more than 125,000 inhabitants. It purports only to repeal sections 117, 118 (Ann. St. 5714, 5715), and the other sections therein mentioned of said chapter 26 "so far as the same conflicts with the provisions" of the act last passed and "all acts and parts of acts in conflict therewith." The general provisions of the election law relative to the nomination of candidates and the placing of their names on the official ballots in all counties of the state of a less population than 125,000, and in the state at large, it was intended by the legislature, should in nowise be disturbed nor interfered with. Although several sections of the general election law are specifically named as being repealed so far as in conflict with the provisions of the act in question, the legal effect of such a repealing clause is, we apprehend, to repeal only such portions of the general election law as are found to be in conflict with the primary act, and then only to the extent they may be found to be in conflict; that is, the old law may yet remain effective in its application to all counties and conditions not coming within the scope and purview of the primary act, and inapplicable *pro tanto* because of such repeal to counties having the population required before the primary act becomes operative. Although in a measure the repealing clause has the form of an express repeal, yet in legal effect it expresses nothing more than a legislative intention of repealing all prior acts and parts of acts in conflict with the provisions found in the body of the act in which the repealing clause is found. It is obvious that the legislature, in using the language it did, undertook only to provide a complete primary election law for counties having the required population, and otherwise to leave the old order of things as then existing, and to repeal only provisions of law then existing which were repugnant to and inconsistent with the new act. Both the old and the new laws were intended to operate in the spheres to which they were applicable, and to be and remain in force and effect.

iveness wherever applicable. It is only when the provisions of the older law can serve no purpose after the enactment of the new, and are so repugnant to the latter that both cannot stand, that the former must give way in its entirety. Reduced to its last analysis, the repealing clause found in the act we are considering can have no more force and effect than would a repealing clause purporting only to repeal acts and parts of acts in conflict with the one last passed; and this latter form of repeal adds nothing to the rule that the act last passed repeals by implication former acts found to be in irreconcilable conflict therewith. In either case there is a repeal to the extent of any repugnancy, but no further. The insertion, therefore, of such a general repealing clause as we here find adds nothing to the repealing effect of the act. 1 Sutherland, *Statutory Construction* (2d ed.), sec. 256; *State v. Yardley*, 95 Tenn. 546, 34 L. R. A. 656. We are therefore of the opinion that the act in controversy repeals only such portions of the general election law as are found to be in conflict with its provisions, and then only to the extent of such conflict, and that otherwise all the provisions of the former act remain in full force and effect. It is, of course, to be understood that, in so construing the effect of the repealing clause of the primary act being considered, we are not to lose sight of the other rule, so closely related thereto, to the effect that repeals by implication are not favored, and will be held so only when the conflict is so apparent and pronounced that both provisions cannot stand at the same time.

2. Section 3 of the act under consideration provides that the primary election shall be held on Tuesday, seven weeks preceding the general election in November, and it is also therein provided that "said day shall be the first day for the registration of voters in all cities and such counties where registration is required." In section 19 of the same act there is found, also, the following provisions relating to the subject of the registration of voters: "In cities wherein registration is by law required, no voter shall re-

ceive a primary ballot or be entitled to vote until he shall have first been duly registered as a voter, then and there in the manner provided by law. Provided, that in cities where registration is by law required, no elector shall be permitted to vote the ballot of any party except that which he was registered at the last general registration as affiliating with, unless he be a first voter or shall have moved into the precinct since the last preceding day of registration. For the purpose of providing a system of registration of party affiliation, it shall be the duty of the mayor and city council of each city wherein registration is required, to provide in the registration books used for the purpose of registering persons who are qualified to vote at the next general election, space for the registration of all persons who may desire to participate in any primary election. Such space shall be provided in said registration books, immediately following the last perpendicular ruled column in such books and shall be headed as follows: 'Party Affiliation.' It shall be the duty of the supervisors of such regular state registration to ask each person who applies to be registered the question, 'What political party do you desire to affiliate with?' And the name of the political party given with such party so applying to be registered shall be recorded in the column provided in such registration books for that purpose. In case any party applying does not desire to state his party affiliation, he shall not be required to do so, nor shall his failure so to do act as a bar to his registration for the purpose of voting at any election other than a primary election, but shall debar him from voting at any primary election." It is evident that the registration contemplated in the last above quoted provision was more especially for the benefit of the voter who offered to vote at the primary election, and who was then and there required to first register in the manner provided by law. We are advised by counsel that during the pendency of the bill in the legislature, resulting in the enactment in question, other bills were pending having for their object the amendment of the general registration law so that

the first registration day should be coincident with primary election day as fixed in the present act. This possibly explains the incongruity in the language used, and why the time fixed as primary election day is declared to be the first day of registration under the general law, and, also, why, as in section 19, provisions are made for the registration of voters presenting themselves to vote at the primary election before such votes are received, as well as the provisions found therein for recording the name of the political party with which such voter affiliates. Whatever may be the true explanation of these provisions being found in the primary election law under consideration, or what may have been the real purpose of the legislature in incorporating them in the act, as passed, we think it is manifest that they cannot be upheld as a constitutional exercise of legislative authority. These provisions relate to a registration law applicable to general elections rather than to a primary election. They are, manifestly, amendatory to the general registration laws. As a registration law the new act is altogether incomplete and imperfect. The provisions regarding the registration of voters, found in the legislation we are considering, are not embraced within, nor comprehended by, the title to the act, and their incorporation therein is therefore in contravention of the fundamental law, which declares: "No bill shall contain more than one subject, and the same shall be clearly expressed in its title. And no law shall be amended unless the new act contain the section or sections so amended and the section or sections so amended shall be repealed." Const., art. III, sec. 11. The title of the act relates exclusively to the subject of primary elections for the nomination of certain candidates and delegates, and to the repeal of existing laws in conflict therewith. The provisions under consideration refer especially to the subject of the registration of voters and is in its effect amendatory of existing statutes. These provisions are foreign to the subject matter embraced in the title of the act. They must therefore, under the rule now well established in this

jurisdiction, as announced in the following cases, be held to be inoperative and void. *Smails v. White*, 4 Neb. 353; *White v. City of Lincoln*, 5 Neb. 505; *Burlington & M. R. R. Co. v. Saunders County*, 9 Neb. 507; *Trumble v. Trumble*, 37 Neb. 340. The law as a whole is not necessarily affected by reason of these void provisions. The act yet remains a complete and a symmetrical whole. Its provisions are capable of enforcement so as to carry into operation the legislative intent, and it can hardly be said that the invalid provisions we have just considered were an inducement for the passage of the remainder. With the general registration law unaffected, as we are constrained to hold it is, the primary act in question serves its full purpose under the provisions found therein for the nomination of candidates and delegates which, by the act, it is sought to regulate and control.

The conclusion reached in respect of the matter last discussed disposes of the objection that only those who have registered at the last general election, except first voters and those moving into the precinct since such election, are permitted to vote at a primary election as therein provided for. It does not appear to have been the legislative intent to exclude from voting at such primary election those not having registered at the last general election, nor do we think it competent for the legislature to do so. Such election must be free to all who are otherwise qualified to participate therein. Where there is a failure to register, when good and sufficient reasons exist, this fact would not justify the disfranchisement of a voter at such primary. *State v. Corner*, 22 Neb. 265. The provisions for registration before voting, as we have seen, contemplated a registration on the same day as the primary election, and, those provisions having been eliminated, no obstacle in the way of registration or the absence thereof can prevent a voter otherwise qualified from casting a ballot at such primary election.

3. Section 32 of the act under consideration declares: "In no case shall the candidates of any political party be

entitled to be designated upon the official election ballot as the candidate of more than one political party, and shall be designated upon the official ballot as the nominee of the party in whose nomination statement his name appears, or in whose certificate of nomination his name appears as the political party with which he affiliates." It is argued that this section undertakes to regulate the manner in which a candidate's name shall appear on the official ballot to be cast at the general election, is amendatory to the general election law with reference to the form and makeup of the official ballot, and is foreign to the subject embraced in the title of the act relating, as it does, to primary elections. Counsel for respondent tacitly concedes the point, but parries by contending that the section refers only to the names of those aspiring to a nomination, and their manner of appearing on the ballots to be voted at the primary, and that it has no relation nor application to the official ballots to be voted at the general election. This latter view does not impress us as being correct. "Official election ballot" and "official ballot," as therein used, obviously refer to the general election ballot, and not to primary ballots. In the definition of terms in the fore part of the act it is said the word "election" shall be construed as a general or city election, as distinguished from a primary election, and that the word "primary" is to be construed as the primary election provided for by this act. In section 29 the same words, "official election ballots," are unquestionably used with reference to the official ballots prepared for the general elections. The section under consideration speaks of "candidates of any political party" and "the nominee of the party," manifestly, we think, in the sense of a person who has been selected by a party as its candidate for a public office, and not with reference to one who is desirous of becoming a candidate and whose name is submitted to the choice of the voters at a primary election. The party's candidate and its nominee cannot be determined until after a choice has been made at a primary. The section

must, we are constrained to say, be held to apply to the appearance of names on the official ballots to be cast at a general election, and not to ballots voted at a primary.

Even though the construction contended for by respondent be permissible, very serious questions would arise as to the power of the legislature to prevent the selection at a primary of the same person as a candidate for a public office by more than one of the political parties, if the voters thereof so chose to do. Of this, however, nothing more need here be said. The act relates to the holding of primary elections. The section under consideration has to do with the form and makeup of the official ballot to be voted at a general election, and is therefore, and for the reasons heretofore fully discussed, not embraced in the subject matter of legislation as comprehended by the title to the act, and is invalid and of no force or effect. It is manifestly amendatory to the law regulating the form of the official ballots, and is also special legislation, in that it would apply only to the official ballots to be voted by the electorate in counties only having a population in excess of 125,000. Its declared invalidity in no way affects the remainder of the act, nor does it appear to be an inducement to its passage.

4. It is contended that the act is void for the reason that its provisions are limited to political parties casting one per cent. or more of the votes cast at the last preceding election. In this connection it is to be borne in mind that, under the general election law as it now stands, and which has stood unchallenged since its adoption, a political party, in order to be entitled to a place for its candidates on the official ballot, must have cast a certain per cent. of the total votes cast at the last preceding election. It is true, provisions are therein found for the nomination of candidates by new political parties and by petition, regardless of the numerical strength of the party supporting such candidates. These provisions are yet preserved, and afford a simple method by which candidates of a party of insufficient numerical strength to participate in a primary may

obtain representation on the official ballot, and whose candidate can be voted for as freely as those nominated at such primary. The primary law has left these provisions intact and unaffected, and through them we think none can, contrary to the fundamental law, be prevented from freely and without impediment or hindrance exercising their right of franchise as guaranteed by the constitution.

It is quite true, we think, that when the legislature undertakes by laws of this character to regulate and control the internal affairs of political parties, and to determine the manner and method of making party nominations for public offices, it must do so without discrimination and with equal consideration and benefit to all. But it is equally necessary to recognize the existence of political parties and to classify them by some convenient standard. The law would hardly serve its purpose without some limitations and restrictions as to a party's numerical strength. To say that any number of voters, however small, may associate themselves together as the embodiment of some political principle or policy of government, and be entitled to representation on the primary ballot, is to pave the way to endless confusion, and to destroy in a large measure the objects sought to be attained by such a law. The limitation as to numbers must be fixed at some point, and the requirement of a numerical strength of at least one per cent. of the total votes does not seem unreasonable, nor an unwarranted restriction on the right of the membership of a political organization to be represented on the primary election ballots. In Ohio the same question arose with reference to the right of party nominees to appear on the official ballot to be voted at the general election. The supreme court of that state held to the view that "the only question is whether the requirement of section 6, that a certified nomination shall be by a political party which at the last election 'polled at least one per cent. of the entire vote cast in the state,' is valid. Certainly, the right of a qualified elector to vote at all elections is secured by section 1, article V of the constitu-

tion, but that the exercise of the right is subject to such regulations, looking to a fair election, as do not unreasonably or unnecessarily impair it, is a proposition too familiar to call for discussion or citation of authorities. Some restriction upon the right to have nominations printed upon the blanket ballot is necessary to render it practicable. In view of the small ratio of voters required to make a certified nomination, and in view of the right to have nominations made by papers or petition signed for that purpose, and of the right conferred by the act upon every voter to supply the names of all persons for whom he may desire to vote, we cannot say that the exercise of the right is unreasonably impeded." *State v. Poston*, 58 Ohio St. 620, 42 L. R. A. 237.

Indeed, a greater percentage than is here required is held to be a proper and valid exercise of legislative power to classify political parties for such purposes. *State v. Jensen*, 86 Minn. 19, 89 N. W. 1126. The requirement as to numerical strength in the case cited was ten per cent. of the total vote. The court, in speaking on this point, observes:

"We are of the opinion that the legislature may classify political parties with reference to differences in party conditions and numerical strength, and prescribe how each class shall select its candidates, but it cannot do so arbitrarily, and confer upon one class important privileges and partisan advantages and deny them to another class, and hamper it with unfair and unnecessary burdens and restrictions in the selection of its candidates. While it seems to some of us that the percentage of the vote selected as the basis of the classification in this act is larger than necessary, yet it was a question for the legislature, and we are not justified in holding that the classification was arbitrary."

In a later case the same court again expresses itself as follows: "The law is also constructed upon the theory that if, at any time, any political party previously in existence shall have become so enervated that it has no liv-

ing and vital principles to present to the people, and there are no men having sufficient interest to stand as sponsors for and advocate its principles, then there no longer remains a necessity for its recognition as a party for the purpose of selecting nominees at such election." *State v. Johnson*, 87 Minn. 221, 91 N. W. 840. See also *Ladd v. Holmes*, 40 Ore. 167, 66 Pac. 714.

We are of the opinion that the limitation complained of is a reasonable regulation regarding party nominations at primary elections, and that it does not infringe on the constitutional safeguards invoked as an insuperable obstacle to its validity.

5. By section 19 of the act the right of an elector to vote at a primary is made to depend upon his political affiliation with the party for whose candidates he desires to cast a ballot. It is therein provided that no person shall "be entitled to vote at such primary election until he shall have first stated to the judges of said primary election what political party he affiliates with, and whose candidates he supported at the last election, and whose candidates he intends to support at the next election." Provisions are also made for challenging any person offering to vote at such primary election, and for his making oath to the truth of the statements above required as to party affiliation and his support of candidates of the party with whom he is offering to vote. It is difficult to perceive any valid objection to provisions of this character, when applied to a primary election law. These laws replace party nominating conventions. The regulation of the membership of the party and of the right to participate in the nomination of its candidates, in this respect, is taken from the party and placed in the control of the legislature. The integrity of the party and the success of its principles and policies can be best maintained by the participation in its affairs of those only who are at heart in sympathy with the objects and ends to be attained by the organization, and loyal to its tenets. An indiscriminate right to vote at a primary would tend, in

many instances, to thwart the purposes of the organization and destroy the party. A hindrance to one, not a member of a party, from participating in the selection of the party's delegates and candidates can in no proper sense be said to interfere with the free exercise of the elective franchise as guaranteed by the constitution. All that is required is that the party offering to vote at the primary, in order to be entitled to vote with either of the parties engaged in nominating candidates thereat, shall have affiliated with such party, supported its candidates generally at the last election, and intend to do so at the next. Open declaration of allegiance to party is absolutely essential to the proper working of any primary law. "By his mere offer to vote for delegates to a convention of any party, the elector does, in effect, declare his intention to support the nominees of such convention, and the oath is provided for as a guaranty of the truth of the declaration already made by such offer to vote." *Rebstock v. Superior Court*, 146 Cal. 308, 316, 80 Pac. 65.

6. The more serious objection to the law, as we view the act as a whole, is the requirement of section 5 with reference to the fees to be paid by those who become candidates for nomination for office at the primaries therein provided for. It is declared that the fees to be paid for filing nomination papers "shall be computed at one per cent. of the emoluments authorized by law for the office to which such candidate aspires, during the term for which he would serve, if elected." It is to be observed that the amount thus required to be paid before one can have his name submitted to the voters at such primary is fixed arbitrarily, and wholly regardless of the value of the services performed in filing the nomination papers. A person aspiring to be nominated for clerk of the district court would be required to pay, perhaps, \$200. A candidate for the nomination of county clerk, probably, \$40, other candidates for county offices different sums, ranging between the two extremes. Is it competent for the legislature to impose burdens of this character on

those desiring to become candidates for public offices, the nominations for which come within the provisions of the primary law? Can a test of ability to pay fees of the magnitude mentioned be made as to one's right to be voted for at a primary election? It is, at first glance, apparent that these enormous fees prevent many from becoming candidates for party recognition, who otherwise would be willing to yield to a public demand that they become candidates for nomination for a public office. It is said the fees required to be paid in the manner stated are for the purpose of defraying the expenses of the primary. It is not so stated in the act. It is expressly provided the expenses of the primary are to be paid out of the public treasury. It is not, therefore, required of us to pass upon the question of the power of the legislature to require those submitting their names to be voted for at a primary to pay the expenses thereof. It appears from the act itself that there is no relation between the charge made for filing nomination papers, as therein provided, and the expenses incident to a primary election, nor to the value of the services rendered in filing such papers. The charges are arbitrary and unreasonable. They make the pecuniary ability of a person to pay the same a test as to his qualification to become a candidate for a party nomination. The law is as objectionable as if the test were based on a property qualification, or the amount the elector had contributed to the public revenues. The primary election contemplated in the act may not in and of itself be an election within the meaning of the constitutional provisions which guarantee that "all elections shall be free; and there shall be no hindrance or impediment to the right of a qualified voter to exercise the elective franchise." Const., art. I, sec. 22. It is, however, a means to an end. It is a part of the election machinery by which is determined who shall be permitted to have their names appear on the official election ballot as candidates for public office. To say that the voters are free to exercise the elective franchise at a general election for

nominees, in the choice of which unwarranted restrictions and hindrances are interposed, would be a hollow mockery. The right to freely choose candidates for public offices is as valuable as the right to vote for them after they are chosen. Both these rights are safeguarded by the constitutional guaranty of freedom in the exercise of the elective franchise. Say the supreme court of Pennsylvania:

"The importance of the relation of the primary to the general election must be apparent. * * * Primary elections and nominating conventions have now become a part of our great political system, and are welded and riveted into it so firmly as to be difficult of separation. * * * It is as much an election law when it strikes at the fraud at the primary election as when it arrests the fraudulent ballot just as it is ready to be dropped into the box at the general election." *Leonard v. Commonwealth*, 112 Pa. St. 607.

Nominations for public office are to be considered in a dual aspect. There is involved, first, the right of every eligible person to be voted for by any elector who desires to do so, and, second, the right of each elector to exercise choice among all who are eligible. "The two rights may be protected by the same legislation, but it is important to remember that there is involved, not merely the right of an individual to be a candidate, but the right of every other person to select him for the office; practically the feasibility of independent political movements depends upon the second right. Now these rights, like the right of suffrage, depend, for their effectual exercise, upon an appointment of time, place, and manner; and the legislature has undoubted power to make regulations for protecting these rights and insuring their enjoyment." *Wigmore, Ballot Reform: Its Constitutionality*, 23 Am. Law Rev. 719, 730.

We should not, of course, confuse provisions amounting only to regulation, even though an inconvenience results, with such as, in a substantial way, interfere with the free

exercise of the elective franchise. The provisions under consideration, we are satisfied, go beyond those of regulation, and operate as a substantial impairment of the right of the electorate to freely choose its candidates for public office, and therefore infringe on the constitutional guaranty above quoted. In Michigan a primary law required that a person should be denied a place on the primary ballot as a candidate for nomination unless he should in advance declare on oath the fact that he was a candidate for the office. The supreme court held such provisions to be violative of the constitutional provisions prescribing the oath required of public officers and that no other oath, declaration or test should be required. In the discussion of the principles involved the court very pertinently argue:-

"The provision of this law which requires that, before the name of any candidate shall be placed upon the ballot at the primary election, such candidate shall on oath declare his purpose to become such, excludes the right of the electorate of the party to vote for the nomination of any man who is not sufficiently anxious to fill public station to make such a declaration. The man who may be willing to consent to serve his state or his community in answer to the call of duty when chosen by his fellow citizens to do so is excluded, and the electorate has no opportunity to cast their votes for him. * * * The authority of the legislature to enact laws for the purpose of securing purity in elections does not include the right to impose any conditions which will destroy or seriously impede the enjoyment of the elective franchise. *Attorney General v. Detroit Common Council*, 58 Mich. 213. We cannot escape the conclusion that the provision in question does most seriously impede the electors in the choice of candidates for office, and that it is in conflict with the provisions of section 1 of article 18 of the constitution. It by no means follows that reasonable provision may not be made by legislation for an initiative in placing upon the ballot the names of those to be voted for,

as, for instance, by requiring a petition by a stated percentage of the voters of the party. But this provision goes further, and precludes the voters from choosing as a candidate one who declines to himself seek the office." *Dapper v. Smith*, 138 Mich. 104, 101 N. W. 60.

In the case at bar it is at once apparent that the condition imposed with reference to the payment of what is termed a filing fee most seriously interferes with the right of the electorate to freely choose from among those eligible to office whomsoever they may desire, and that this, for the reasons given, amounts to an unwarranted hindrance and impediment to the free exercise of the elective franchise. This provision must therefore fall. The act as a whole does not, however, necessarily fall because of the part thereof held to be invalid. It yet remains complete and capable of enforcement. Unless these provisions, held to be invalid, were an inducement to the passage of the act, and without which it would not have received legislative sanction, the act, as a whole, should be permitted to stand. Whether or not such invalid provisions were an inducement to the remainder should be gathered from the act itself. Before we would be justified in declaring the whole act void and of no force, it should be made apparent from an inspection of it, having in view the legislative purpose in its adoption, that the invalid portion operated as an inducement to the passage of the law. The rule seems to be "that where the act itself includes two distinct subjects the whole act must be treated as void, from the manifest impossibility of choosing between the two; but that this rule applies only in those cases where it is impossible from an inspection of the act itself to determine which part is void and which valid. When this can be done the rule does not apply, unless it shall appear that the invalid portion was designed as an inducement to pass the valid, so that the whole, taken together, will warrant the belief that the legislature would not have passed the valid part alone." *Trumble v. Trumble*, 37 Neb. 340.

"Where a statute contains provisions which are uncon-

stitutional, if the valid and invalid are not so connected as to be incapable of separation, and the valid portion is a complete act and not dependent upon the part that is void, the latter alone will be disregarded and the rest sustained, if it is manifest that the void part was not an inducement to the legislature to pass the part which is valid." *State v. Moore*, 48 Neb. 870.

Applying the rule deducible from the authorities cited, we are constrained to the view that the invalid portion was not an inducement or consideration for the passage of the valid portions, and that the statute is a valid and enforceable act of the legislature, save with reference to the provisions herein found to contravene some of the provisions of the fundamental law. It follows that the writ prayed for must be denied, and it is accordingly so ordered.

WRIT DENIED.

JOSEPH GUTSCHOW V. WASHINGTON COUNTY.*

FILED NOVEMBER 11, 1905. No. 13,864.

1. **Drains:** CLAIM FOR DAMAGES: WAIVER. When a person files a claim for damages to his premises caused by the location of a proposed drainage ditch, he thereby waives objection to any irregularities in the proceedings to establish the same. *Davis v. Boone County*, 28 Neb. 837.
2. ———: DAMAGES. Where an assessment to the amount of the special benefits he has received has already been assessed against the owner of lands over which a drainage ditch is proposed to be constructed, the value of such special benefits should not be deducted from any damages accruing to the land not actually taken for the construction of the proposed improvement. *Martin v. Fillmore County*, 44 Neb. 719, distinguished.

ERROR to the district court for Washington county: LEE S. ESTELLE, JUDGE. *Reversed*.

* Rehearing denied. See opinion, p. 800, *post*.

Brome & Burnett and E. C. Jackson, for plaintiff in error.

E. B. Carrigan, F. Dolezal and Walton & Mummert, contra.

LETTON, C.

This is a proceeding in error from the district court for Washington county to review the proceedings of that court in the trial of an appeal from an allowance of damages made in proceedings for the construction of a drainage ditch in that county; the ditch being the same one the proceedings to establish which were attacked in the case of *Morris v. Washington County*, 72 Neb. 174. The plaintiff Gutschow is the owner of lands through which the line of the proposed ditch runs. In the report of the engineer filed in the proceedings for the establishment of such drainage ditch, the cost of the location and construction of the ditch through the lots and lands benefited by said ditch belonging to the plaintiff is apportioned at the sum of \$1,124.20. On the filing of the report a time was fixed by the county clerk for a hearing upon the same, and notice duly given according to the statute, and in pursuance to the notice the plaintiff filed objections to the jurisdiction of the county board, and also filed his claims for damages and for compensation for land actually taken. The objections to jurisdiction were overruled, and a finding made by the county board that 3 5-10 acres of the plaintiff's land were appropriated for the location of the ditch, of the value of \$140, and they further appraised the damages to the remainder of the tract at the sum of \$100, and overruled and disallowed the plaintiff's claim for further compensation. On appeal to the district court a trial was had to a jury and a judgment rendered in favor of the plaintiff for \$225, to reverse which judgment these proceedings are brought.

So far as the objections to jurisdiction are concerned,

they are disposed of by the decisions in *Dakota County v. Cheney*, 22 Neb. 437; *Darst v. Griffin*, 31 Neb. 668, and *Dodge County v. Acom*, 61 Neb. 376, and we deem it unnecessary to further discuss this question. We have heretofore held that, where a landowner files a claim for damages caused by the location of a public road over his land, he thereby waives any objections on the ground of irregularity in locating the road. *Davis v. Boone County*, 28 Neb. 837. When the board once acquired jurisdiction, all subsequent irregularities were waived by the filing of the plaintiff's claim for damages. The district court therefore did not err in sustaining the motion to strike a part of the plaintiff's petition.

The question raised as to the right of appeal from the finding of the board that the improvement was conducive to public health, convenience or welfare has already been considered and determined in *Dodge County v. Acom*, *supra*, and with the rule there announced we are content.

The trial court instructed the jury that, for the diversion of the natural flow of the water of Fish creek from the natural channel thereof through the plaintiff's land, he could only be allowed nominal damages. It is urged by the defendant that this instruction, even if erroneous, was without prejudice, since the jury were also instructed that the measure of damages for the injury and depreciation to land not actually taken is the difference between the fair market value of the whole farm immediately before and after the location thereof, less the amount appropriated for the ditch, and further, in this connection, that they were entitled to take into consideration the effect of the location of the ditch upon the uses to which the farm is adapted, or its productiveness, and whether the location and construction of the ditch render it more or less attractive to buyers. They were also told they should consider the size of the farm, the size and general manner of the construction of the ditch, the manner in which it crosses the lands of the appellant, and whether or not the construction of the ditch renders it more or less conven-

ient to carry on said farm. The defendant argues that under these instructions all actual damages which the plaintiff might suffer from the diversion of the waters of Fish creek are included, and that an instruction to allow only nominal damages for the diversion of Fish creek is proper. As to this proposition we have some doubt. If the instruction as to the waters of Fish creek had been omitted entirely, there is no doubt that the other instructions are broad enough to direct the jury to consider the damages, if any, suffered by the appellant by reason of the diversion of these waters, but this item of damages was removed from their consideration altogether by this instruction being given directing them to allow only nominal damages therefor. Whether the instruction is so prejudicially erroneous as to justify a reversal we are not compelled to determine at this time, but think that upon a new trial it should not be given.

The fifth assignment of error challenges the action of the trial court in refusing to give instruction No. 1 asked for by the plaintiff and in giving instruction No. 5 on its own motion as to the deduction of special benefits. Instruction No. 5 referred to is as follows: "When you have ascertained the total damages, if any you find, suffered by appellant to the portion of his land not taken, you must deduct therefrom any special benefits which you find said land may have derived from the location and construction of said ditch. In determining the special benefits accruing to land by reason of the construction of the ditch, it is proper for you to take into consideration whatever will come to the land from the drain or ditch, making it more valuable for tillage or more desirable as a place of residence, or more valuable in the general market, the true and final test being what will be the influence of the proposed improvement on the market value of the property; but you are in no event to take into consideration the general benefits which the appellant may derive from the location and construction of said ditch; and a general benefit is one which is enjoyed, not by appellant alone, but by

the property owners along the line of said proposed ditch." The objection made to the refusal of the instruction asked by the plaintiff and the giving of this instruction is that it announces an improper rule as to the deduction of special benefits. It will be seen that the rule laid down in this instruction is that which has been adopted by this court with reference to the ascertainment of damages by reason of the appropriation of land for the purposes of the construction of a highway or railroad, or for other like public purpose.

The plaintiff contends that a different rule should obtain in a case where the landowner himself is compelled to bear the burden of the special benefits which his land sustains from the improvement. A special tax of \$1,124.20 has been levied and assessed upon the lands of the plaintiff to pay for the construction of this improvement. This assessment represents the value of the special benefits which will accrue to the real estate through which the ditch passes by reason of its construction, and he is compelled to pay that amount to reimburse the county for the money expended in the construction of the ditch. In the case of a highway being opened across his premises or of a railway being constructed thereon, the landowner may, in a sense, be said to pay the value of the special benefits which he derives by reason thereof, by such value being deducted from whatever damages the land not actually taken for the improvement may suffer by reason of the same. In the case of a drainage ditch, however, these benefits are assessed against him by the very act of the public authorities which appropriates his land to the public use. To allow these benefits to be deducted from any damages which he may suffer to the land not taken would be to compel him to pay twice to the public the value of the special benefits which he has received. This would manifestly be unjust and inequitable, and would impose a burden upon him in excess of that borne by those whose lands were not damaged. To illustrate, suppose two adjoining proprietors were each assessed \$1,000 for special

benefits accruing to the lands by reason of the proposed improvement. If the land of one were not damaged in any way by the proposed improvement, this amount would be the extent of the burden imposed upon him; but, if the land of the other proprietor were so traversed by the line of the ditch that the value of the remainder of the tract was depreciated \$2,000 by the construction of the ditch, if he were then compelled to offset against the damage \$1,000 in special benefits received by reducing his compensation to that extent, his burden would be double that of his neighbor, since he would be mulcted \$2,000 for the same improvement for which his neighbor pays but \$1,000. In the case of a railroad or a highway the value of the special benefits accruing to the land is not assessed against, and paid by, the landowner, and hence the same should be deducted from his incidental damages; but with a drainage ditch the conditions are different, and the rule laid down by the district court would compel a double burden to be placed upon the landowner whose premises were damaged. Where special benefits have already been assessed against the owner of lands damaged by a proposed drainage ditch, the value of such special benefits should not be deducted from any damages accruing to the land not actually taken for the construction of the proposed improvement. *Livingston v. Mayor of New York*, 8 Wend. (N. Y.) 85, 22 Am. Dec. 622; *Drainage Commissioners v. Volke*, 163 Ill. 243, 45 N. E. 415; *Thomas v. County Commissioners*, 5 Ohio N. P. 449. The apportionment of the cost of the ditch to each landowner is an exercise of the power to tax, but the taking of his property and the ascertainment of the damages he may suffer thereby is an exercise of the power of eminent domain. The statute makes no provision for the deduction of damages from the amount assessed against the land as special benefits, but the method provided is that the county authorities shall establish the apportionment according to benefits first, and afterwards examine claims for damages and allow compensation therefor. No method is provided for offsetting one against the other.

It is true that in *Martin v. Fillmore County*, 44 Neb. 719, it is said that, in addition to recovering the value of the land appropriated, the landowner should recover any damages sustained by that portion of the land not appropriated, and as against the latter item special benefits, but not general benefits, may be set off. That case, however, was reversed, for the reason that no damages whatever were allowed the defendant; and it is said:

"The foregoing is a rule interpreting that clause of the constitution providing that the property of no person shall be taken or damaged for public use without just compensation therefor. Whether the act providing for the construction of such ditches (Comp. St. ch. 89) contemplates an assessment of damages in accordance with this rule is immaterial to the case." The question under consideration was neither raised nor determined in that case, and the rule announced here is not inconsistent with the result then reached.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

REVERSED.

The following opinion on motion for rehearing was filed March 17, 1906. *Rehearing denied*:

Drains: DAMAGES: BENEFITS. Where an action is brought to recover damages occasioned by the construction of a drainage ditch, and it appears that the special benefits received by any particular tract of land exceed that portion of the cost of the ditch apportioned to it, the special benefits in excess of the cost may be set off against consequential damages.

LETTON, J.

The former opinion (*ante*, p. 794) filed in this case apparently having been misunderstood by counsel, we think it

proper to make more clear the meaning of the court. The proper rule was announced in the second paragraph of the syllabus, as follows:

"Where an assessment to the amount of the special benefits he has received has already been assessed against the owner of lands over which a drainage ditch is proposed to be constructed, the value of such special benefits should not be deducted from any damages accruing to the land not actually taken for the construction of the proposed improvement. *Martin v. Fillmore County*, 44 Neb. 719, distinguished."

But counsel seem to have construed the opinion to hold that the amount of the special benefits is in all cases determined by the cost of the ditch. It is clear that the value of the special benefits which may accrue to a particular tract of land by the construction of a drainage ditch may greatly exceed that portion of the cost of the ditch apportioned to that tract. The proportion of the cost assessed to any particular tract cannot exceed the special benefits accruing to that tract, but the special benefits may greatly exceed the proportion of the cost of construction which is assessed against it. As is pointed out in the opinion:

"The statute makes no provision for the deduction of damages from the amount assessed against the land as special benefits, but the method provided is that the county authorities shall establish the apportionment according to benefits first, and afterwards examine claims for damages and allow compensation therefor. No method is provided for offsetting one against the other."

This language refers to the proceedings whereby the cost of the improvement is assessed against the land benefited. At that time no method of offsetting benefits against damages is provided. However, when an action is brought to recover damages and it appears that the special benefits received by any particular tract of land exceed that portion of the cost of the ditch apportioned to it, the special benefits in excess of the cost may be offset against consequential damages, that is, such part of the

Bevard v. Lincoln Traction Co.

value of the special benefits as is in excess of the assessment can be used to reduce the damages.

The motion for rehearing is

OVERRULED.

HANNAH BEVARD V. LINCOLN TRACTION COMPANY.

FILED NOVEMBER 11, 1905. No. 13,957.

1. **CARRIERS: LIABILITY FOR INJURIES.** In order to render a street railway company liable for injuries received by a person traveling upon one of its cars, the negligence of its servants, either alone or in concurrence with the negligence or wrongful act of other persons, must be the proximate cause of the injuries.
2. The wrongful act of a stranger is not sufficient to make it liable, unless it might reasonably have been foreseen and guarded against by the carrier.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: LINCOLN FROST, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

Frederick Shepherd, for plaintiff in error.

Clark & Allen, contra.

LETTON, C.

This is an action for negligence against the defendant as a common carrier of passengers. The material allegations of the plaintiff's petition are that on the fourth of July, 1903, "the plaintiff was a passenger on the city-bound car over the last particularly described track, and, having paid her fare, was, without negligence or fault on her part, seated in a regular seat provided for passengers on the right hand side of said car; that at about the corner of F and Seventeenth streets, about as the car was rounding a curve, there was an explosion under the same, caused by the wheel coming in contact with an explosive on the rail, whereby the trap in the floor of the car was forced up

and open at the side and close to the plaintiff, and flame and smoke came through from beneath with such suddenness and in such quantity as to terrify and bewilder plaintiff and benumb her faculties, and plaintiff wholly without negligence on her part, but involuntarily and unavoidably, started to her feet in the instinct of self-preservation, and by the motion of the car, and by reason of the said involuntary and unavoidable start, was instantly thrown to the pavement, striking on her head and left shoulder and sustaining painful and permanent injuries of the nature and extent hereinafter shown; that the day on which the said accident occurred was a national holiday, and that during all of said day, and all over the system of the defendant, its cars were constantly exploding torpedoes and other explosives placed on the rails for the purpose of making noise, and that the defendant knew this, and had notice of the danger to the plaintiff and to its other passengers at the time and place above mentioned; that the defendant provided no broom or sweep to said car so as to have removed any explosive matter from the rail; that the defendant failed to provide a floor to said car of sufficient strength and construction to prevent the said trap from flying up and open, and so endangering plaintiff in the manner described; that defendant did not provide any watchman or guards to prevent the explosive from being placed upon the rail, and that it did not provide any guard-rail or other means to keep plaintiff upon the car; and that in all of these respects defendant was negligent."

The defendant filed a general denial, and also pleaded contributory negligence on the part of the plaintiff. At the close of the testimony the defendant moved the court to direct a verdict in its favor, which was done, and the case dismissed.

The evidence shows that the plaintiff, who is a single woman, 49 years old, residing in the city of Lincoln, had gone to the suburb of Normal on the cars of the defendant company about 2 or 3 o'clock in the afternoon; that there were many explosions upon the rail, appar-

ently of torpedoes, as she went out; that she returned about 10 o'clock at night upon one of the cars of the defendant, taking the front seat on the right-hand side of the car, a little in front of the trucks. The car was an open one, with a guard rail on one side, the other side being left open for access and egress. On the way home, and at or near the curve at the corner of Seventeenth and F streets, the plaintiff testifies that a violent explosion took place upon the track, and smoke and flame came up around the seat, and around a trap-door which was situated just back of the plaintiff's seat, by which she was greatly frightened and alarmed. She testifies that she jumped to her feet, and the next thing she knew she was upon the pavement. There were several other passengers upon the car, who testified as to the violence of the explosion, and that it startled them, but no one except the plaintiff rose to his feet until after the car stopped. One of the passengers testified that the plaintiff rose to her feet, hesitated a moment, and then jumped off the car, and that the conductor called to her not to jump. The car stopped almost immediately, and the plaintiff was picked up and was taken to her home. It appears that during the day the company had been much annoyed in the business part of the city, about six or eight blocks from this point, by the placing of torpedoes or other explosives upon the track by boys and men, and that its manager had attempted to put a stop to this, by requesting individuals to desist, by appealing to the police for protection, and upon one line by fastening gunny sacks in front of the car wheels in such a manner as to brush the explosives off the rails. This, however, proved ineffectual, by reason of boys and men running up and cutting the sacks off while the motor-man and conductor were engaged. The manager of the company testified that there were no explosions during the day upon the tracks on that part of the line where the accident occurred, while two residents of that locality testified that there were many small explosions during the afternoon near this point; one of these witnesses testify-

ing that there was a much louder explosion than any of the others late in the evening after he had gone to bed, sufficiently loud to awaken him, and cause him to get up and go to the window. There is no evidence of any explosion, either at this point or elsewhere, during the day of the volume of sound of this one, or causing smoke and flame within the car, such as this one caused.

The plaintiff bases her right to recover upon the general principle that a street railway company is a common carrier of passengers, and therefore bound to exercise extraordinary care, and the utmost skill, diligence and human foresight, and is liable for the slightest negligence. It is argued that the defendant, though knowing the likelihood of dynamite and explosives being placed upon the track, did nothing to protect the passengers; that it did not patrol the track, nor provide a sweep, nor fasten down the trap in the floor of the car, and that any one of these precautions would have prevented the injury to the plaintiff. The principles thus asserted as governing the liability of street railway companies to their passengers are undoubtedly the law in this state, and this is conceded by the defendant. If the defendant had, in the exercise of the greatest care, reasonable grounds to believe that violent explosions would occur, such as were liable to frighten its passengers to such a degree that, under the influence of a temporary loss of self-control thus caused, the operation of the car might cause them injury, it would be negligence upon the part of the company to omit to take all reasonable precautions to protect its passengers against the probability of such injury.

The carrier, however, is not an insurer against accidents, and, while it is liable for the concurrent negligence of its servants and third parties, or the negligence of its servants in combination with the torts of third parties which result in personal injuries to passengers, yet it is only liable when its servants have been guilty of negligence. The element of negligence on its part or on the part of its servants must exist. The wrongful act of a

third party alone is not sufficient to make it liable. If the fact that an explosion of the violence of that which frightened the plaintiff could reasonably have been foreseen by the carrier as one of the incidents liable to occur during her transportation, it would have been guilty of negligence in failing to protect her against liability to suffer any personal injuries of which it might be the proximate cause, but, so far as the evidence shows, such explosions as had occurred during the day, though annoying, were petty in their nature compared to this, and not such as might reasonably cause the carrier to anticipate one of such great violence. Even against such petty explosions, however, the evidence shows that the carrier had appealed for police protection, and that from the number of miles of track which it was operating it was impossible for it to procure men enough to patrol the same. The plaintiff asserts that the defendant, by the use of sweeps extending in front of each truck, might have removed explosives from the rail, but the evidence shows that it would take from two to three hours to equip each car with sweeps, and that in the summer time their use produced such a cloud of dust as to make it almost impossible to carry passengers. So far as the evidence shows, an explosion of the violence of the one complained of was unprecedented in the operation of the defendant's railway, and it had no reasonable grounds to anticipate the occurrence of the same. The act was the wrongful act of third parties, over whom it had no control, and whose operations it could not reasonably foresee.

Under these circumstances, we can see no reason for holding the defendant liable for plaintiff's injuries, and recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

AFFIRMED.

WILLIAM A. CLINGAN V. DIXON COUNTY.

FILED NOVEMBER 11, 1905. No. 13,970.

Contributory Negligence: ERRONEOUS INSTRUCTION. Under the circumstances of this case the giving of an instruction as to contributory negligence, which there is no evidence to support, held prejudicial error.

ERROR to the district court for Dixon county: GUY T. GRAVES, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

McCarthy & McCarthy and *J. V. Pearson*, for plaintiff in error

O. A. Kingsbury and *F. A. McMaster*, *contra.*

LETTON, C.

This is an action to recover damages for injuries sustained by reason of the negligence of the defendant county in failing to maintain in proper repair a bridge across a stream in Dixon county. At the trial a judgment was rendered for the defendant, from which the plaintiff prosecutes error to this court.

The testimony shows that the accident happened upon a bridge which was about 50 feet long, including the plank approaches, and 14 feet wide. The floor of the bridge was made of two-inch plank, but for a width of 8 feet in the center of the bridge there was a double floor of two-inch plank, over which the travel was conducted, leaving a space of about 3 feet on each side of the double plank between that and the railing. On the morning of the accident the plaintiff was riding upon horseback, along the road leading to the bridge, and the last he remembers about what occurred before the accident is that he was riding at a walk at a point about 200 to 300 feet before he reached the bridge; the next thing that he remembers is when he recovered consciousness in the house of Mr. Rahn, after the accident. Two neighbors living

near the bridge were informed by a boy that a man was lying upon the bridge, and, when they reached there, found the plaintiff trying to support himself upon the bridge railing, with blood upon his face, and found his horse standing in the creek beneath the bridge. The plaintiff seems to have been severely injured. The railing of the bridge was not broken, and the horse had apparently slipped through between the railing and the floor. One of the floor planks was broken outside of, and close to the edge of, the double planking; it was held to the joists by a single spike in such a manner that if one stepped upon the plank it would go down, and it would rise again when the pressure was removed, leaving a hole large enough to admit a horse's hoof. The morning was misty, and there was sufficient dirt upon the bridge so that scratches and marks, apparently made by the struggling of the horse, were found near the broken plank. The dirt approach to the bridge was washed out on one side to a depth of several feet, so as to leave but a narrow track for travel before approaching the bridge.

The plaintiff's theory is that this hole on the east side of the approach frightened the horse, which the plaintiff was riding, and caused it to seek the west side of the bridge where the broken plank was, and that the horse stepped into the hole, stumbled and fell, precipitating the plaintiff upon his head, so as to cause the injuries from which he suffered. From the testimony of the witnesses for the plaintiff as to the marks upon the bridge, and the hair and blood found thereon, together with the condition that the horse's hind legs were in as to being scraped and abraded, the jury may well have found that the injury was sustained by the horse stepping in the hole, causing him to fall and throw the plaintiff. On the other hand, there was testimony given by the defendant's witnesses, which would justify the conclusion that the horse had slipped upon the slippery floor and fallen before reaching the hole, and that the marks upon the bridge floor, and upon the horse itself, were caused by its struggles in en-

deavoring to arise, and in falling from the bridge between the railing and the floor. The evidence shows that the bridge was constantly being used by the public, and that, if the travel was confined to the portion of the bridge covered by the double planking, it was entirely safe.

The plaintiff complains of the giving of instruction numbered four requested by the defendant. This instruction is as follows: "The jury are instructed that a county is not liable to respond in damages because of every depression, inequality, or defect in the surface of its public highways and bridges, even though injury may result therefrom. It is only liable when it fails to keep its public highways and bridges in a reasonably safe condition for public travel, and it is not necessary that it should keep the entire width of its highways and bridges in good condition for travel, unless the public convenience and travel demand it; and if you find from the evidence that a sufficient width of the road and bridge at the point of the alleged injury was in a reasonably safe condition for public travel, and that the plaintiff could have passed over and along the same without injury, by the exercise of ordinary care and prudence, then you will find for the defendant." This instruction is substantially the same as one which was requested and refused in the case of *City of Lincoln v. Gillilan*, 18 Neb. 114. Instructions 1 to 10, which were given in the same case, enunciate the same principles, except that they omit that portion which relieved the city from keeping the entire width of the street in good condition for travel, unless the public convenience and travel demand it. The discussion of this instruction in that case is applicable to the case at bar. While, as a general abstract proposition, the statement as to there being no requirement that the entire width of highways and bridges be kept in good condition may be correct, still, under the circumstances of this case, we think it was misleading, and should not have been given, without some modification to fit the circumstances of the case. If the defect in the bridge was such that the county authorities,

by the exercise of reasonable care, could have remedied it, and was such that the bridge was dangerous for a person using ordinary care, then the county would be liable, and the question of whether or not the county was obliged to keep the entire width of the bridge or highway safe is not material. If there was nothing in the appearance of the bridge to suggest that it was unsafe to use the portion having only single planking, a person would not be compelled to remain upon the double planking, but might use any part of the bridge, provided he use ordinary care in the manner of his use. The presumption, which applies as well to the plaintiff as to the defendant, is that all parties acted with ordinary care, and this presumption must be overcome by evidence, either direct or circumstantial. *Spears v. Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co.*, 43 Neb. 720. *Swift & Co. v. Holoubek*, 60 Neb. 784. But the whole matter is for the jury to determine, and a verdict for either party might be supported under the evidence.

The plaintiff further complains of the giving of paragraph 6, which submitted the question of contributory negligence, upon the ground that there is absolutely no evidence of such negligence upon the plaintiff's part. The evidence fails to disclose any negligence whatever on the part of the plaintiff, and hence this instruction should not have been given. *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Schalkopf*, 54 Neb. 448. Under the facts in this case, this was clearly prejudicial.

Plaintiff also urges that the verdict is contrary to law, and in support of this assignment argues that the statute, which renders counties liable to damages occurring by the failure to repair bridges, contains no limitation or reservation whatever, and that it was never meant to confine the liability of the county to injuries occurring within the narrow limits of the traveled way, and that a construction of the statute, which thus limits the liability of a county, is unauthorized. We do not agree with counsel in this view of the statute. To hold that every foot of the four rods prescribed as the width of highways in this state should be

Adair County Bank v. Forrey.

made safe for public travel would, in the present stage of development of this commonwealth, place an onerous and unnecessary burden upon its people. When the county has exercised reasonable care and prudence in keeping its bridges in repair and suitable for the ordinary necessities of travel, it has fulfilled its duty. If its bridges are kept in a reasonably safe condition for travel in the ordinary mode, it cannot be held responsible for damages; if, however, a bridge is in such a defective condition that persons in the exercise of ordinary care traveling thereon are injured through defects, which reasonable care upon the part of the county might have obviated, the county is liable therefor. There is no evidence in the record to support the allegation that the defective condition of the highway before reaching the bridge contributed to the accident, and we have held in *Goes v. Gage County*, 67 Neb. 616, that a county under township organization is not liable for such defects. The evidence at the trial took an unnecessarily wide range, and we think that upon a new trial the inquiry should be narrowed to the material questions.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for a new trial.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for a new trial.

REVERSED.

ADAIR COUNTY BANK V. A. C. FORREY ET AL.

FILED NOVEMBER 11, 1905. No. 13,983.

1. **Process: NONRESIDENTS.** The provisions of section 65 of the code: "Where the action is rightly brought in any county, according to the provisions of title four, a summons shall be issued to any other county against any one or more of the defendants, at the plaintiff's request"—apply to nonresidents of the state who may be found in any other county to which the summons may be issued.

Adair County Bank v. Forrey.

2. ———: JURISDICTION. Where an action is rightly brought in any county, a summons may be issued to any other county against one or more defendants. A nonresident of the state who may be found therein is as liable to service as a resident, and the court of the county in which the action was brought thereby acquires jurisdiction.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: **WILLIAM A. REDICK, JUDGE.** *Reversed.*

McGilton, Gaines & Storey, for plaintiff in error.

B. F. Thomas, R. W. Turner and O. H. Herring, contra.

LETTON, C.

This action was brought by the Adair County Bank, as plaintiff, against A. C. Forrey, C. C. Croffoot and D. J. Fogarty in the county court of Douglas county, Nebraska, upon a promissory note made by Forrey and Croffoot, payable to Fogarty, or bearer, for \$225, payable one year after date. Before maturity, Fogarty sold and indorsed the note to the Adair County Bank, and verbally waived demand, notice and protest. At the time the petition was filed, a summons was issued, directed to the sheriff of Douglas county, and was served personally upon Fogarty in that county. Fogarty was a resident of the state of Iowa, but was then present in Douglas county. On the same day, another summons was issued for the defendants Forrey and Croffoot, directed to the sheriff of Nuckolls county, Nebraska. Forrey and Croffoot resided in the state of Kansas, near the city of Superior, Nebraska. No service was had upon this summons, and the same was returned. The case was continued from time to time for service. On December 6, 1901, an alias summons was issued, directed to the sheriff of Nuckolls county, and was personally served upon the defendant Croffoot in that county on January 4, 1902. Croffoot entered a special appearance in the county court of Douglas county, and objected to the jurisdiction of the court, which was over-

ruled. Pleadings were afterwards made up, the cause tried upon its merits, and judgment of dismissal rendered. From this judgment an appeal was taken to the district court for Douglas county. The defendant Croffoot, in his answer, preserved his objections to the jurisdiction of the court, and alleged, in substance, that he was a resident of the state of Kansas, and that he had been fraudulently induced to come into the state of Nebraska by the plaintiff for the purpose of being served with summons therein; that his codefendant, Fogarty, was a nonresident of the state of Nebraska, and that, by reason thereof the court had no jurisdiction to issue an alias summons to any other county; that, by service of the summons on defendant in Nuckolls county, the county court of Douglas county did not acquire jurisdiction over him. He also pleaded a general denial to the allegations of the petition. A jury was impaneled, and, after the evidence was introduced and the parties rested, Croffoot moved to dismiss the action as to him, upon the ground that the court had no jurisdiction over his person or the subject of the action, and that the county court of Douglas county was without jurisdiction to issue a summons against him. The motion was sustained, and the action dismissed as to Croffoot; judgment by default was rendered against Fogarty. A motion for a new trial was filed by the plaintiff as to the dismissal of the case as to Croffoot, which was overruled, and from which order and judgment the plaintiff prosecutes error.

The principal grounds relied upon by the defendant to establish the want of jurisdiction are: First, that he was a nonresident of this state, and was induced by fraud to come into the state for the purpose of service of summons upon him; second, that since Fogarty was a nonresident of this state, he could not be properly sued in Douglas county so as to confer jurisdiction upon the court to issue an alias summons to Nuckolls county for service upon Croffoot in that county.

Sections 51 to 60, inclusive, title IV of the code, pro-

vide for the venue of actions. Section 59 applies to transitory actions such as this. Omitting part, this section provides: "An action * * * against a nonresident of this state * * * may be brought in any county in which there may be property of, or debts owing to, said defendant, or where said defendant may be found." Under section 59, therefore, since Fogarty was found in Douglas county, though a nonresident of the state, the action was properly brought in that county, and the only question is as to whether a summons might properly be issued to any other county for the purpose of reaching his codefendants. Section 65, title V of the code, provides: "Where the action is rightly brought in any county, according to the provisions of title four, a summons shall be issued to any other county, against any one or more of the defendants, at the plaintiff's request." The provisions of this section have frequently been before this court for consideration, and we have uniformly held that, if the defendant served in the county in which the action was brought was a *bona fide* defendant, whose interest was adverse to the plaintiff in the action, the venue was properly laid, and a summons might be issued to another county for other persons jointly liable. *Barry v. Wachosky*, 57 Neb. 534; *Hobson v. Cummins*, 57 Neb. 611; *McCormick Harvesting Machine Co. v. Cummins*, 59 Neb. 330; *Seiver v. Union P. R. Co.*, 68 Neb. 91.

We understand it to be conceded by the defendant in error that, if Fogarty had properly been served in Douglas county, a summons served upon Croffoot in Nuckolls county would give the court jurisdiction over his person if he were a resident of Nuckolls county; but it is argued that, since section 59 of the code provides that actions against a nonresident of this state may be brought in any county where said defendant may be found, the word "may" means "must," or "shall," and that therefore, an action against Croffoot *must* be brought in Nuckolls county, the county in which he was found, and that the county court of Douglas county never acquired jurisdiction

over him. This argument, however, entirely disregards the provisions of section 65 of the code. Even if we construe the word "may" in section 59 to mean "must," how does the case stand? The defendant Fogarty must be sued in Douglas county, since that is the county in which he was found, and, since the action was rightly brought against him, a summons may issue under the provisions of section 65 to any other county. But it is argued that, even if the action against Fogarty was properly brought in Douglas county, if it is sought to reach Croffoot, another action must be brought in Nuckolls county. Under section 59, title IV, relating to venue, the proper venue of the action was in Douglas county. The provisions of title V do not apply to venue, but provide for the manner in which actions may be commenced, and section 65 provides for the place where summons may be served when an action has been rightly brought under the provisions of title IV. It is an imperative rule of construction that effect be given, if possible, to every portion of a statute. To adopt one construction would eliminate section 65 entirely, while the other construction gives effect to both sections. Further than this, the construction contended for by defendant in error would necessitate a multiplicity of actions in a case where nonresident defendants were numerous, if service might be had upon them in different counties within this state, whereas, by the other construction, one action only would be required, though they might be summoned in different counties. These sections must be construed together, and, where an action has rightly been brought in one county, a summons may be issued to any other county in the state, and served upon any person personally present therein, whether resident or nonresident. If a person is personally present within the confines of the state, it makes no difference whether he is a resident or nonresident, so far as his liability to personal service of summons upon him is concerned. A nonresident has no greater privilege in that regard than a resident of the state. We are of the opinion that jurisdiction was

obtained over Croffoot by service of the summons in Nuckolls county.

As to the objection to the jurisdiction that defendant was fraudulently induced to come within the county of Nuckolls in this state for the purpose of service being made upon him, under the rule laid down in *Hurlburt v. Palmer*, 39 Neb. 158, this defense, as made, was for the jury to pass upon and not for the court. Further, it is asserted by the plaintiff in error that the district court sustained the motion to dismiss for want of jurisdiction upon the ground alone that a nonresident must be sued in the county where he is found, and the record, while ambiguous, seems to bear this out.

A large part of the brief of defendant in error has been devoted to the argument that Fogarty is not a defendant in good faith, and that his presence in Douglas county, so that summons might be served upon him, was collusive. But the answer does not raise this issue, the allegation therein being merely that "Fogarty is not a *bona fide* resident of Douglas county, nor was he such resident at the time of the commencement of the action herein, or at any time thereafter," etc. It is not contended by plaintiff in error that Fogarty ever was a resident of Douglas county, *bona fide* or otherwise. It is not charged in the answer that Fogarty's presence in Douglas county was by collusion with the plaintiff, and hence this contention is outside of the issues. Upon the whole record we think the case should have been submitted to the jury.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings.

REVERSED.

DAVID H. HEATON, APPELLEE, v. JOHN P. WIREMAN,
APPELLANT.

FILED NOVEMBER 11, 1905. No. 13,954.

Trespass: INJUNCTION. One in the lawful and peaceable possession of real estate, especially if it be his dwelling, may restrain repeated and riotous acts of invasion and trespass until the title and right of possession can be settled in some regular and orderly way.

APPEAL from the district court for Sheridan county:
WILLIAM H. WESTOVER, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

J. H. Edmunds and Frank J. Kelley, for appellant.

W. W. Wood, contra.

AMES, C.

Plaintiff and defendant are owners, respectively, of adjoining tracts of land, and there is a dispute about the division line. The plaintiff had been for many years in possession to the limits to which he claimed that his ownership extended, and had established and maintained for a long time his dwelling house, vegetable garden, etc., near the disputed boundary. The defendant took it upon himself to decide the matter in controversy, and to carry his judgment into execution invaded the plaintiff's possession, destroyed his growing vegetables, plowed and dug up the soil, and proceeded to erect a fence within a few feet of the plaintiff's dwelling, arming himself for the better accomplishment of his purpose with a loaded gun, and threatening the plaintiff and the members of his family with bodily injury. This action was begun to enjoin the continuation of this conduct, which amounted to a private nuisance, until the true boundary could be ascertained, and then to procure the injunction to be made perpetual. There was a trial upon ample proofs, and a judgment was rendered conformably thereto, and to the pleading and

prayer of the petition, from which the defendant appealed.

There are two grounds alleged in the brief for a reversal. The first is that the plaintiff had an adequate remedy at law in an action, or in actions, for trespass; and the second is that the judgment is not sustained by the evidence. As to the first, the law is too well settled to require the citation of authority that one in the lawful and peaceable possession of real estate, especially if it be his dwelling, may enjoin repeated and riotous acts of invasion and trespass until the title and right of possession can be settled in some regular and orderly way. A contrary doctrine would be destructive of the peace and well-being of society. As to the second objection, it is not much insisted upon by counsel. The evidence is somewhat voluminous, and we have examined it sufficiently to be convinced that it upholds the judgment of the district court, affirmance of which we recommend.

LETTON and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be

AFFIRMED.

ERNEST E. HART, APPELLANT, v. W. A. SAUNDERS ET AL.,
APPELLEES.

FILED NOVEMBER 11, 1905. No. 13,964.

Deed: CONSTRUCTION. The construction of an ambiguous deed is ascertained from the language used and from a consideration of the situation and circumstances of the transaction of which it was a part.

APPEAL from the district court for Douglas county:
ABRAHAM L. SUTTON, JUDGE. *Reversed with directions.*

McGilton, Gaines & Storey and Mayne & Hazelton, for appellant.

W. A. Saunders and W. W. Slabaugh, contra.

AMES, C.

In 1891 the Citizens State Bank of Council Bluffs, Iowa, was the owner of an irregular tract of land situated in this state and known as "tax lot ten." The plot of ground thus designated comprised contiguous parts of adjoining governmental quarter sections and was particularly described as follows: "The south 64 rods of the east half of the northwest quarter of the southwest quarter and the south 8 3-10 acres of the west 10 3-10 acres of the northeast quarter of the southwest quarter of section 18, township 16 north of range 13 east of the 6th P. M., in Nebraska." On July 23, 1891, the bank sold and conveyed to Jennie L. Rice a part of this tax lot. The description contained in the deed was as follows: "A part of tax lot ten (10) and described as follows: All the west 469 feet of the south 64 rods," etc., followed by a particular description of the tax lot as the same is given above. On the same day the grantee, Mrs. Rice, conveyed to one Tunison, by precisely the same description, except a slight variation in the phraseology of the introductory part thereof, which ran "that part of tax lot ten (10) or more particularly described as all the west four hundred and sixty-nine (469) feet of the south 64 rods," etc., continuing with the particular description of the tax lot as the same is above given, and concluding with a reservation of a small tract "in the southwest corner thereof." Afterwards, and by a deed dated June 18, 1892, the bank made to Mrs. Rice a second conveyance of lands described as "the east twelve and 5-6 acres of the south sixty-four (64) rods," etc., and also continuing and concluding with the above given particular description of the tax lot. It is evident, therefore, at the time of the execution of this latter deed both

the bank and Mrs. Rice supposed that the former conveyance between the same parties was inoperative upon any part of the 12 5-6 acres. At the time Mrs. Rice made her conveyance to Tunison, she took from the purchaser a purchase-money mortgage, which she sold and assigned to one Chittenden, and which the latter foreclosed, thereby obtaining title to the mortgaged premises. After having done so, Chittenden conveyed to one Gates, and Gates to the defendant and appellee Saunders, 8.3 acres of the land embraced within the description of the 12 5-6 acres contained in the secondly above mentioned deed from the bank to Mrs. Rice. The plaintiff, Hart, claims this same 8 3-10 acres by mesne conveyance under this last mentioned deed, and brought this action to establish title to the same, but was defeated in the district court and prosecutes this appeal.

There is no question of adverse possession, nor does either party claim to be exempt from constructive notice of the recitals and descriptions contained in all the above mentioned deeds, so that the sole question is what, as between Mrs. Rice and her grantee, did her deed to Tunison convey. The defendant contends that it conveyed two parcels of land, each a part of "tax lot ten," and the plaintiff, that it contained only one. For the purpose of answering this question, we think it is pertinent to inquire whether Mrs. Rice acquired title to one or to two parcels from the bank, because it is plain that she only could have conveyed, or have intended to convey, to Tunison so much land as she acquired by this last mentioned instrument. Now that deed recites that it conveys "a part," that is a single part, of tax lot ten, and similarly the Tunison deed recites that it conveys "that part of tax lot number ten," which also indicates a single part. The ambiguity arises from the use of the words, "and the south 8.3 acres," etc., but these words occur in the particular description of the tax lot itself, and are essential for a description of the tract or plot of land off the west side of which were carved the 469 feet affected by the deeds.

That is to say, the tax lot consisted of one tract and of another tract; and of the composite tract, so constituted, 469 feet taken from the west side thereof was conveyed by the bank to Mrs. Rice, and by the latter to Tunison. That such was the intent and understanding of the parties is made manifest by the fact that the remainder of the tract, consisting of the whole of one of its original constituents, and of the other diminished by 469 feet taken from its west side, was subsequently conveyed by the bank to Mrs. Rice, and by her to another person, named Olson, under whom the plaintiff claims.

There are other features of the situation and of the circumstances of the transaction that tend to throw light upon it and upon the intent of the parties. If the bank and the Tunison deeds were intended each to convey two parcels of land, one of those parcels was on the west side of the tax lot and the other upon the east side, and the two were separated by a strip 191 feet wide, and extending 64 rods across the tax lot from north to south, and containing only about 4 acres of ground. This strip of ordinary or rather rough farm land, and thus detached from all other ownership, would have been adapted to no particular or special use, and would have been undesirable for any separate or peculiar occupancy, and would have been of but little present or prospective value. No rational motive can be, or is attempted to be, assigned for a conveyance of the two parcels which the defendant contends were conveyed by the deeds last mentioned, without including this strip also. Not only could it not have been omitted by mistake, but, if the defendant's construction is correct, some pains and ingenuity were employed for the purpose of excluding it, but, nevertheless, entirely obvious phraseology for the expression of that intent was not only not chosen, but some further pains would seem to have been taken to render the language of the instruments ambiguous, and this latter pains was also taken without assignable motive. We think the latter supposition is as inadmissible as the former, and that the reasonable pre-

sumptions are, first, that the parties did not intend to convey two parcels, reserving a practically valueless strip; and second, that, if they had so intended, they would have chosen language clear and apt for the accomplishment of that object.

The deed from Mrs. Rice to Tunison excepts "a tract three hundred (300) feet north and south and one hundred and ninety-nine (199) feet east and west in the southwest corner thereof." This exception is important in the present controversy only as bearing upon the interpretation of the instrument. If the deed conveyed a single parcel off the west side of the tax lot, the exception has an obvious meaning and the subject matter of it is readily ascertained and defined, but if the conveyance was of two parcels, one on the west and one on the east side of the tax lot, the instrument affords no means of ascertaining out of the corner of which parcel the exception or reservation is to be taken or made. A suggestion by the defendant that the words "southwest corner thereof" refer to the tax lot as an entirety is inadmissible, because the office of an exception is to reserve or retain something from that which, in its absence, the instrument would have conveyed, and it is not pretended that, in the absence of this exception, the deed would have conveyed the entire tax lot. In other words, if the exception does not refer to the description of what the deed was intended to convey, it has no meaning at all. Evidently, therefore, if the deed had been intended to convey two parcels, the exception would have specified from which of them the smaller tract, title to which it reserved or retained in the grantor, was to be carved.

By the foregoing considerations, we are convinced that the learned judge of the district court erred, and we recommend that the judgment be reversed and the cause remanded, with instructions to render a judgment for the plaintiff conformable to the prayer of his petition.

LETTON and OLDHAM, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, it is ordered that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded, with instructions to render a judgment for the plaintiff conformable to the prayer of his petition.

JUDGMENT ACCORDINGLY.

CONTINENTAL CASUALTY COMPANY V. KATIE BUCHEL.

FILED NOVEMBER 11, 1905. No. 13,960.

1. **Insurance: INJURY: NOTICE.** Where notice of an injury is received by an accident insurance company and the company acts upon such notice, it is immaterial as to what relationship existed between the sender of the notice and either the assured or the beneficiary.
2. **Proof of Loss: WAIVER.** Where the conditions of an insurance policy provide for filing final proof of loss upon blanks furnished by the company within thirty days of the injury and the company, with knowledge of the injury, neglects to furnish such blanks within the time specified, such conduct on the part of the company is a waiver of the condition as to time.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: EDWARD P. HOLMES, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

Billingsley & Greene, Manton Maverick and R. H. Hagelin, for plaintiff in error.

T. J. Doyle and G. W. Berge, contra.

OLDHAM, C.

On February 20, 1902, the Continental Casualty Company, defendant in the court below, issued its policy of insurance insuring the life of Joseph E. Buchtel against death by accident in the sum of \$300. Katie Buchtel, plaintiff in the court below and niece of the assured, is the

beneficiary named in the policy. The assured resided at Port Hill, in the state of Idaho, at the time of his death, and the beneficiary, who was then a minor, resided with her mother in the city of Omaha, Nebraska. On the 14th day of July, 1902, the assured was killed by a falling tree in a cyclone, and had then paid the premium on his policy to April 30, 1903. Immediately after the death of the assured, the coroner of Kootenai county, Idaho, notified the defendant company of the fact of the assured's death by accident. When this notice was received, the company requested further information concerning the accident, to which the coroner replied in a letter, describing with great particularity every incident connected with the death of the assured and giving the verdict of the coroner's jury at the inquest. Subsequently, on the 27th of October, 1902, more than 100 days after the accident, defendant company wrote a letter to the coroner (Dr. G. E. Barber) as follows: "We hand you herewith proof of death blank upon which formal proof of death of Edward J. Buchtel, holder of policy No. 463,375, may be furnished us for further consideration of the case." The evidence of the defendant is that it never received any answer to this letter, but nothing is said as to whether or not the blank furnished was ever returned. About four months after the death of the assured, plaintiff's mother, having been informed of such death and also of the fact that the deceased held a policy of insurance payable to her daughter, wrote to the defendant, asking for information as to that fact. In answer to this communication, the company informed plaintiff's mother as to the number and amount of the policy, and also of the fact that the company had been notified by the coroner of the death of the assured, and that blanks for the proof of death had been sent by the company to the coroner, from which it had received no return. Plaintiff and her mother, after a considerable delay, finally succeeded in procuring from the coroner the policy of the deceased, and thereafter, on June 15, 1903, the plaintiff, by her attorney, wrote to the company, inclosing the coroner's certificate of the death of the

assured as a proof of loss, and demanded settlement of the policy, and at the same time offered to furnish any further information required. In answer to this communication the company replied as follows: "The first notice which the beneficiary herself, or any one acting for her, gave to this company was under date of November 18, more than four months after the death, when the mother of the beneficiary wrote in her behalf and stated that she was informed at the time of Mr. Buchtel's death he had a policy in this company. * * * I grant you, as you know, that the coroner had previously advised the company of the death. In response to that information, blank was furnished him on the presumption that he was acting for beneficiary. That blank has never been returned to this office and we have at the present time no affirmative proof as required by the policy. You will see from the above that, if the coroner was the agent of the beneficiary, the claim is disallowed for failure to furnish proof as required. If he was not the agent of the beneficiary, then the claim is disallowed for insufficiency of notice. I am therefore obliged to inform you that we have no legal liability on this claim and that the same is rejected for the reasons above given, and for other reasons which are not necessary to take up at this time." On the trial there was no conflict in the testimony, and, when the evidence was all in, the court directed a verdict for plaintiff and entered judgment on the verdict. To reverse this judgment defendant brings error to this court.

Defendant relied on two defenses contained in the conditions of the policy. The first one is that a written notice from the insured, or his representative, and a certificate from the attending physician or surgeon, stating the time and place of the injury or death, should be received at the office of the company within 30 days after the date of such injury or death. The contention with reference to this defense is that the coroner, who attended the inquest, was not the representative of the assured when the notice was given. This contention is wholly without

merit, in view of the fact that the notice was received and retained by defendant, and further particulars of the death and its surrounding circumstances were requested by the defendant from the coroner, and the answer to this request, mailed on August 18, 1902, was received and retained by defendant, without any suggestion of further proof of loss, until October 27, 1902, when the letter inclosing the company's blank is alleged to have been sent for the final technical proof required. Now, while defendant's witness testified that he never received any answer to this letter, he nowhere says that the proof of loss was never filled out and returned by the coroner to the company. If, as a matter of fact, a true notice of the loss was received and acted upon by the company, the relation of the parties sending the notice to the deceased, or his beneficiary, is wholly immaterial. *Omaha Fire Ins. Co. v. Dierks*, 43 Neb. 473.

The second defense relied upon—the failure to file the blank furnished by the company within 30 days—is pleaded in a negative pregnant, as follows: “That final proofs containing answers under oath to questions in the blank furnished by the company for that purpose were not filed with the company in Chicago, Illinois, within one month from the date of the injury, and thereby all claims for benefits were waived and forfeited to the company, and the defendant company has in no manner waived the conditions of said policy so as above alleged.” Now, this allegation of the answer is tantamount to admitting that proof on a blank furnished by the company was filed, but not within 30 days of the date of the accident. The fact that the company had timely notice of the death, of which it subsequently received full particulars from the coroner holding the inquest, and neglected to furnish the blank on which a more formal proof was required for more than 100 days after the accident, was clearly a waiver of the time in which this technical requirement might be relied upon. And, again, the fact that the defendant company refused and neglected to furnish

Eager v. Eager.

blanks to the plaintiff, when her attorney offered to furnish any information required was, under all the circumstances, a waiver of a demand for such special form of proof. And still again, when the managing officers of defendant, in answer to the letter of plaintiff's attorney, denied liability on the policy for other reasons than failure to file this notice, such denial of liability was a waiver of the proof of loss. *Home Fire Ins. Co. v. Fallon*, 45 Neb. 554.

We therefore conclude that the learned trial court was fully justified in directing a verdict for the plaintiff at the close of the testimony, and we recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

AMES and LETTON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons given in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

JENNIE EAGER, APPELLANT, V. DEWITT EAGER, APPELLEE.*

FILED NOVEMBER 11, 1905. No. 13,958.

1. The district court is a court of general jurisdiction and may send its original process to any part of the state, unless restricted therein by statute.
2. **DIVORCE: JURISDICTION.** Section 6, chapter 25, Compiled Statutes, 1903, confers jurisdiction upon the district court to hear and determine an action for divorce in any county in the state where the parties, or one of them, reside.
3. —: **PROCESS.** Where the plaintiff resides in one county and the defendant in another, summons may issue from the county where the plaintiff resides and the action is commenced to any other county in the state where the defendant resides.
4. —: **JURISDICTION.** By sections 902 and 903 of the code, the action for a divorce is taken out of the general provisions of the code for the prosecution of other actions therein mentioned.

* Rehearing denied. See opinion, p. 830, *post*.

APPEAL from the district court for Douglas county:
CHARLES T. DICKENSON, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

W. T. Nelson, for appellant.

Smyth & Smith, John O. Yeiser, F. D. Eager and G. W. Berge, contra.

DUFFIE, C.

Jennie Eager, the appellant, brought her action in the district court for Douglas county to obtain a divorce from the appellee, DeWitt Eager. At the time of commencing her action she was, and for more than six months had been, a *bona fide* resident of Douglas county. Her husband at that time was a resident of Rock county, Nebraska. A summons was issued by the clerk of the district court for Douglas county directed to the sheriff of Rock county, who served the same personally on the appellee. In due time, and after due return of the summons by the sheriff of Rock county, the district court for Douglas county defaulted the defendant, took plaintiff's evidence in the case, and awarded a decree of divorce, and alimony in the sum of \$1,000. After the decree was entered, the defendant made a special appearance in the district court for Douglas county, asking to have the judgment for alimony set aside, for the reason that no summons had been served upon him which gave the court jurisdiction to enter a personal judgment against him for alimony. The decree, so far as it awarded alimony, was set aside, and from this order Mrs. Eager has taken an appeal to this court.

The appellee contends that, under our code of civil procedure, no personal judgment can be entered against him on a suit brought by his wife for a divorce, unless service of the summons has been had on him in the county where the action is pending. Originally actions for divorce were brought in the ecclesiastical courts. The common law courts of England had no jurisdiction of such actions. The statute requires an action for divorce to be brought

in the county where the parties, or one of the parties, to the action reside. An action for divorce, together with some other specified actions, are exempted from the operations of the code of civil procedure. Section 902 of the code is to the effect that, "until the legislature shall otherwise provide, the code shall not affect proceedings on habeas corpus, quo warranto, or to assess damages for private property taken for public use, nor proceedings under the statutes for the settlement of estates of deceased persons, nor proceedings under statutes relating to dower, divorce, or alimony," etc. While the code has provided for the venue of all ordinary actions in general terms, a special statute relating to the action of divorce was enacted by the general assembly, and is found in chapter 25, Compiled Statutes, 1903. By section 6 of that chapter (Ann. St. 5328) it is provided as follows: "A divorce from the bonds of matrimony may be decreed by the district court of the county where the parties, or one of them, reside, on the application by the petition of the aggrieved party in either of the following cases:" etc. It will be observed that this is a special statute conferring authority upon the district court to grant a divorce, and that court has jurisdiction where either of the parties to the action resides in the county where the action is brought. This, of necessity, implies that the court having jurisdiction of the subject matter of the action, and jurisdiction to try the case in the county where the action is brought, may acquire jurisdiction of the person of the defendant by issuing a summons to any county in the state where the defendant resides; and it needs no argument to demonstrate that, if the court has jurisdiction of the person of the defendant, it may enter a personal judgment against him for alimony, which is a mere incident to the action for divorce.

It is a well-understood rule that courts of general jurisdiction of any state can acquire jurisdiction of a party defendant by process issued to any county in the state, unless such jurisdiction is restricted by a statutory law.

Eager v. Eager.

In Wells, Jurisdiction, sec. 113, it is said: "As to the general jurisdiction of the courts of a state this is, of course, coextensive with its sovereignty, which is limited only by the territory of the state, and attaches to all the property and persons within the limits thereof," etc. Courts of general jurisdiction have, therefore, the right to deal with the person or property of anyone residing within the boundary of the state in all matters where jurisdiction has not been limited by statute. The legislature having said that the district court of the county where one of the parties to a divorce action resides has jurisdiction to grant a divorce, by necessary implication, gives the court power to acquire jurisdiction over the person of the defendant by service of its process in any county of the state where he may reside. The case is a special one, not coming under any provision of the code, but falling under the provisions of sections 902 and 903 of the code, recognizing an exceptional and special proceeding in this class of cases. This is also, we think, recognized in *Brown v. Brown*, 10 Neb. 349.

We recommend that the decree of the district court be reversed, and the order and decree granting a divorce and alimony to the plaintiff in the action be reinstated.

ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the decree of the district court is reversed, and the order and decree granting a divorce and alimony to the plaintiff in the action is reinstated.

REVERSED.

The following opinion on motion for rehearing was filed March 22, 1906. *Former judgment modified and cause reversed. Rehearing denied:*

LETTON, J.

We are satisfied with the conclusion reached in the former opinion, *ante*, p. 827, as to the jurisdiction of the

Clifford v. Thun.

district court, but our attention has been called to the fact that the decree awarding alimony was set aside at the same term of court at which it was rendered, though the order was not spread upon the journal and was not made a matter of record, until at the following term a *nunc pro tunc* order was made reciting the fact. It was within the discretionary power of the court, upon good cause shown, to set the decree aside at the same term at which it was rendered. *Bradley v. Slater*, 55 Neb. 334. No exception was taken to this action. At the next term of court further proceedings were had upon the question of jurisdiction, and the court held that it had no jurisdiction and dismissed the plaintiff's petition for alimony. From this final order the plaintiff appealed to this court, where the judgment of the district court was reversed, but the decree for alimony was ordered to be reinstated. As we have seen, this decree was set aside at a prior term. This was a final disposition of that decree. It was as effectually nullified as if it had never been rendered, and it is beyond the power of this court to direct its reinstatement.

For these reasons, the former judgment of this court, so far as it reinstates the decree for alimony, is set aside, and the cause is reversed and remanded for further proceeding.

REVERSED.

HENRY A. CLIFFORD V. HANS THUN ET AL.

FILED NOVEMBER 11, 1905. No. 13,965.

1. Amended Petition: LIMITATIONS: DEMURRER. An amended petition setting up a new cause of action, which is barred when the amended petition is filed, is vulnerable to a demurrer. *Buerstetta v. Bank*, 57 Neb. 504.
2. Foreclosure Sale: SUIT TO REDEEM: LIMITATIONS. One seeking to redeem from a foreclosure sale based on a tax lien must bring his action therefor within two years from the date of the tax sale.

Clifford v. Thun.

3. **A notice by publication** was directed to "The Globe Investment Company," the true name of the corporation being "Globe Investment Company." *Held*, That the variance was so slight as to be immaterial.
4. **Notice.** The same notice was directed to "H. A. Wyman, Receiver of the Globe Investment Company," Wyman's true name being "Henry A. Wyman." *Held*, That, as the petition showed that Wyman was appointed receiver by the court of a sister state, he was not a necessary party to the action and a defect in the notice to him was immaterial.

ERROR to the district court for Brown county: JAMES J. HARRINGTON, JUDGE. *Affirmed*.

Charles Battelle, for plaintiff in error.

A. W. Scattergood, *contra*.

DUFFIE, C.

February 21, 1903, Henry A. Clifford, the plaintiff in error, filed his petition in the district court for Brown county for the foreclosure of a mortgage on 80 acres of land made to the Globe Investment Company by Henry Thun and Dora, his wife. September 5, 1903, he filed an amended petition, in which he alleges that on August 6, 1901, the land covered by his mortgage was sold for the delinquent taxes due thereon for the years 1895-1900, both inclusive; that one Skillman was the purchaser at said sale, and that on August 22, 1901, said Skillman commenced an action to foreclose his tax certificate, making numerous parties defendant to said action, and, among others, *The Globe Investment Company* and *H. A. Wyman* as receiver of said company; that one Toy, who held a tax certificate about nine years old, filed an answer and cross-bill asking a foreclosure thereof; that a decree was entered foreclosing the tax liens held by Skillman and Toy, and that on December 24, 1901, all the real estate was sold to satisfy said decree, Hans Thun becoming the purchaser. The petition further recites that the plaintiff is the owner and holder of a mortgage, made by Henry Thun

and wife to the Globe Investment Company, covering the premises in controversy; that the same is due and unpaid, and he prays to be allowed to redeem the premises from the tax sale foreclosure, and for the foreclosure of his mortgage. To this amended petition Hans Thun entered a demurrer, alleging that it did not state facts sufficient to constitute a cause of action or to entitle the plaintiff to the relief demanded.

It will be noticed that the original petition filed by the plaintiff asked no relief other than the foreclosure of his mortgage. The amended petition filed on September 5, 1903, while asking a foreclosure of the plaintiff's mortgage, also set up an entirely different and independent cause of action against the defendants, viz., the right to redeem any interest in the land which the defendants had acquired under a tax foreclosure sale. It was held in *Selby v. Pueppka*, 73 Neb. 179, that section 3, article IX of the constitution of the state, providing for two years' time within which to redeem from tax sales, applies to judicial as well as administrative sales. In that case it was urged that the confirmation of the sale and the making of a deed cut off the owner's right to redeem, and this was the intimation of the court in *Logan County v. McKinley-Lanning Loan & Trust Co.*, 70 Neb. 406. In that case the question was not squarely before the court and was not the principal question considered. Objection was made to a confirmation of the sale upon the theory that such confirmation would extinguish the owner's right to redeem, and the case was apparently argued upon that theory; but the question of whether a confirmation would have that effect was not before the court and was not determined. In the *Selby* case the question was squarely raised and it is said:

"The terms of the constitution are very sweeping. Art. IX, sec. 3. A right of redemption is given from all sales of real estate for the nonpayment of taxes for two years after the sale. This provision has been held to be self-executing. *Lincoln Street R. Co. v. City of Lincoln*, 61

Neb. 109. It has also been declared to apply to judicial sales as well as to administrative sales. *Logan County v. Carnahan*, 66 Neb. 685. We see no reason for suggesting any change in the ruling. The confirmation applied only to the regularity of the proceeding. It held the sale valid and regular, but in no way adjudicated the right of redemption from it. The latter existed by virtue of a self-executing constitutional provision independent of the court. The court's action must be held to have been taken with this right in view. Of course, in this view, that confirmation, like the other proceedings in this sale, was had provisionally and subject to the right of redemption—the costs of the sale, as well as the costs of foreclosure, being added to the taxes and interest in making the redemption."

We are still satisfied with this view of the case, and the plaintiff's amended petition asking to redeem, having been filed more than two years after the land had been sold for taxes, the plaintiff's right of redemption had expired. It is claimed that the decree foreclosing the tax lien is void because the defendant, "Globe Investment Company," was summoned under the name of "The Globe Investment Company," and that "Henry A. Wyman," receiver of the Globe Investment Company, was summoned as "H. A. Wyman," only the initial of his first name being used, and that notice by publication only was given. The variation in the name of the corporation was so slight as to leave no doubt of its identity, and is wholly immaterial. *Lane v. Innes*, 43 Minn. 137. The receiver of a corporation appointed by the courts of another state not being a necessary party to an action brought against the corporation in this state, the failure to give the real and true name of Wyman in the proceeding is of no account.

It is further objected that the court was without jurisdiction to foreclose the tax certificate held by Toy, it being issued on a sale made nine years previous to the filing of his cross-bill. That the lien for taxes originally held by Toy under this certificate had, in the language of this court in *Alexander v. Shaffer*, 38 Neb. 812, become "ex-

tinguished absolutely" by his failure to foreclose it within the time allowed by statute is true, but that the court mistook the law, and gave Toy a decree for the amount claimed, did not oust it of jurisdiction to hear and determine the case. The decree was erroneous and reversible on appeal, but not void and subject to collateral attack.

Again, the tax lien held by Skillman had not been barred and the decree, to the extent that it awarded him relief, was in all respects legal and free from error. That it included an amount erroneously awarded to Toy could affect the plaintiff only as to the amount that he should pay in case of redemption, if he was awarded the right to redeem.

It is further urged that the plaintiff owning the mortgage at the time was not a party defendant to the tax foreclosure suit, and that his right of redemption has not been extinguished by the decree. The plaintiff by his bill is seeking to enforce a right of redemption as distinguished from an equity of redemption; a right based upon a provision of the constitution and the statutes of the state, and it is by these provisions that his right is to be measured and determined and not by the decree entered by the district court in the tax foreclosure action, which, as before stated, did not attempt to determine or cut off the privilege awarded him by the laws of the state to redeem from the tax sale within two years from its date. The difficulty under which he labors is that this right was not asserted within the time limited, and his right to redeem has been barred by lapse of time, fixed, not by the decree, but by statute.

We conclude that the court was right in sustaining the defendant's demurrer to the plaintiff's amended petition, and we recommend the affirmance of the order.

ALBERT and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the order of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

**ALEXANDER J. HART ET AL., APPELLANTS, V. CITY OF OMAHA
ET AL., APPELLEES.**

FILED NOVEMBER 11, 1905. No. 13,810.

1. **Cities: PARKS AND BOULEVARDS: SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS.** Section 101b, chapter 12a, Compiled Statutes 1903, authorizes a special assessment on such real estate as may be "specifically" benefited by a park or boulevard to pay for the land appropriated or purchased for such improvement.
2. **Statutes Not in Conflict.** The provisions of that section are not controlled by nor in conflict with section 158 of the above chapter, which provides generally for the assessment of damages for the appropriation of private property for street purposes upon abutting or adjacent real estate.
3. **Bonds.** Section 101b, *supra*, does not require the issuance of bonds under any and all circumstances when lands are appropriated for the construction of parks, parkways or boulevards, but only where the special assessment is insufficient for that purpose.
4. **Special Benefits: QUESTION OF FACT.** Ordinarily, whether a particular lot or tract of land is specially benefited by a park, parkway or boulevard is a question of fact, upon which the distance of the land from such improvement would have a bearing, but the mere fact that real estate is three-quarters of a mile from a boulevard will not enable the court to say as a matter of law that it is not specially benefited thereby.

APPEAL from the district court for Douglas county:
CHARLES T. DICKINSON, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

H. W. Pennock, for appellants.

W. H. Herdman, *C. C. Wright* and *A. G. Ellick*, *contra*.

ALBERT, C.

Section 101b, chapter 12a, Compiled Statutes 1903 (Ann. St. 7552), relating to cities of the metropolitan class, provides for the appointment of park commissioners, and defines their powers and duties. One of the duties enjoined upon such commissioner is "from time to time to devise, suggest and recommend to the mayor and coun-

cil a system of public parks, parkways and boulevards or additions thereto within the city, or within three miles of the limits thereof, and to designate the lands, lots or grounds necessary to be used, purchased or appropriated for such purpose." There follows, 'in the same section, this provision: "And thereupon it shall be the duty of the mayor and council to take such action as may be necessary for the appropriation of the lands, lots or grounds so designated, the power to appropriate lands, lots or grounds for such purpose being hereby conferred on the mayor and council, and for the purpose of making payments for such lands, lots or grounds so appropriated or purchased as hereinafter provided, assess such real estate as may be specifically benefited by reason of the appropriation or purchase thereof for such purpose, and issue bonds as may be required for such purpose, to the extent and amount required in excess of such assessments." The preliminary steps required by this section for the levy of a special assessment to pay for the lands appropriated for a boulevard connecting two parks of the city of Omaha were taken and their regularity is not assailed at this time. Such special assessment was levied against the property which was found to be specifically benefited, including certain lots belonging to the appellant, Della C. Patrick, which are about three-fourths of a mile from the improvement in question. This suit, so far as said appellant is concerned, was brought to restrain the collection of the assessment levied against her property. She was denied relief below, hence her appeal.

It is claimed that the assessment is void because appellant's property neither abuts upon such boulevard nor is adjacent thereto. It is argued that section 101b, *supra*, was not intended to specify the real estate which might be assessed for the purpose of opening a boulevard, but merely to cover, in general terms, the organization, powers and duties of the park commissioners, and that the power to assess for such purpose is restricted by section 158 (Ann. St. 7626) of the same chapter to property abutting

or adjacent property. The language of this section, so far as material at present, is as follows: "The council shall have power, and is hereby authorized, to assess the damages awarded or recovered for grading, change of grade, or for the appropriation of private property, upon the lots and lands benefited, which shall abut or be adjacent to the street, avenue or alley graded, or for the opening, extending or widening of which private property shall be appropriated," etc. In support of this argument the appellant also relies on *McCormick v. City of Omaha*, 37 Neb. 829, where it was held that a provision of the Omaha charter of 1887, identical with section 158, *supra*, was held to confer the only statutory power to assess the cost of opening and extending a street, and section 69 of that chapter, which in general terms, granted the power to assess for paving and extending a street, was not applicable. It is now contended that section 69 sustains the same relation to the case referred to that section 101b sustains to this case. This construction cannot be sustained. Section 69, *supra*, is too long to set out at length. It contains a general grant of power to levy and collect special taxes to pay for opening, extending, grading, "parking," curbing and beautifying streets. It expressly limits the tax for grading, curbing, guttering and paving to the property abutting on that portion of the street improved. It contains no provision for the payment of damages arising from the exercise of the right of eminent domain. Because of such omission, the court held, in *McCormick v. City of Omaha*, *supra*, that there was no authority under section 69 to levy a special assessment to pay such damages, but that resort must be had to another section of the same chapter, which we have heretofore said is identical with section 158, *supra*. But section 101b, *supra*, in express terms requires the mayor and council to levy a special assessment upon "such real estate as may be 'specifically' benefited," etc. The difference between a section of a statute which confers no authority upon the municipal authorities to act, and one which not only confers such

authority, but makes it mandatory upon such authorities to act, and the effect of that difference on the value of *McCormick v. City of Omaha, supra*, as a precedent in this case are too obvious to require elucidation. The provisions of section 158 in nowise conflict with those of section 101b. Each gives the municipal authorities power to levy special assessments. By the general provisions of the former, such power is restricted to abutting or adjacent real estate. By the express provisions of the latter, such power is extended, in special cases, to real estate "specifically benefited." The assessment in question falling within the latter, the special provisions thereof as to the property subject to the assessment must prevail. To hold otherwise would be to ignore the legislative intent, expressed in plain and unmistakable language. That this court cannot lawfully do.

It is charged that the assessment is unjust and oppressive. But no irregularity in the proceedings of the municipal authorities is pointed out. On the face of the record, it would seem that all the steps essential to a valid levy had been taken. No fraud, gross injustice or mistake has been shown which would bring the case within the rule announced in *Wead v. City of Omaha*, 73 Neb. 321. The charge appears to be based solely on the fact that the appellants' property, being about three-fourths of a mile from the boulevard, cannot be "specifically" benefited thereby. But whether property is thus benefited is a question of fact, which must depend upon the facts and circumstances in each case. On such question, the distance of the property from the boulevard would undoubtedly have an important bearing. But this court is now asked to say, as a matter of law, that, because the property is three-fourths of a mile from the boulevard, it receives no special benefit therefrom, and inferentially, that the assessment thereof for the purpose stated amounts to fraud, gross injustice or mistake. This the court, acting within its constitutional bounds, is unable to do. We do not mean to be understood to say that the distance might not

Hubler v. Johnson-McLean Co.

be so great in a given case as to enable the court to say, as a matter of law, that the property was not specially benefited. That question stands open. What we do hold is that this court cannot say, in view of all the facts and circumstances, that, because the property is three-fourths of a mile from the boulevard, it derives no special benefit from such thoroughfare.

It is next contended that the assessment is void because the entire cost of opening the boulevard was assessed to private property, while section 101b provides for the issuance of bonds therefor. The section does not unqualifiedly provide that bonds shall be issued, but only "to the extent and amount required in excess of such assessments." If the assessments levied according to law were sufficient to pay the entire cost of the improvement, there was no "excess," and bonds were not required. The legislature certainly never intended to compel an unnecessary bond issue.

It is recommended that the decree of the district court be affirmed.

JACKSON, C., concurs.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the decree of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

ROBERT HUBLER V. JOHNSON-MCLEAN COMPANY.

FILED NOVEMBER 11, 1905. No. 13,956.

1. **Master and Servant: CONTRIBUTORY NEGLIGENCE.** In an action for personal injuries, where the plaintiff is charged with contributory negligence, evidence of an unfounded belief on his part as to a condition which caused the injuries is immaterial, where it appears that he might have known, and that a due regard for his own safety required him to know, the truth.
2. **Directing Verdict.** Evidence examined, and *held* that a motion to direct a verdict against the plaintiff was properly sustained.

ERROR to the district court for Douglas county: GUY T. GRAVES, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

Cooper & Dunn, for plaintiff in error.

Wharton, Baird & Sons and *T. J. Mahoney*, *contra.*

ALBERT, C.

While the plaintiff was in the employ of the defendant and at work in its planing-mill, his hand was lacerated and maimed by a saw in use in the mill, and this action was brought by him to recover damages therefor, on the theory that his injuries were the result of negligence on the part of the defendant. When the plaintiff rested, the court directed a verdict against him. Judgment was given accordingly. The evidence shows that the injuries were inflicted by a rip-saw, which was a part of the machinery of the mill. This saw was about two feet in diameter, and was placed at the center of a platform, extending north and south six feet, and east and west three and a half feet. The platform was attached to a framework at the ends and sides, consisting of pieces about four inches wide. About midway between the ends, and midway between the sides of the platform, there was a groove or opening extending parallel with the sides of the table, through which the saw projected some inches above the platform. Immediately under the framework of the platform was another framework of about the same length and width, and with like side and end pieces, but differing from the former in that a piece extended north and south from one end to the other, about midway between the sides. The shaft on which the saw hung was attached to this piece. The platform was movable, and by raising or lowering it the height of the saw above it could be adjusted to the thickness of the lumber to be cut. When the maximum height was desired, the platform was lowered until the end and side pieces of its framework rested on the corresponding

end and side pieces of the frame below. At the time of the accident, the defendant's foreman, the sawyer, who operated the rip-saw, and the plaintiff, who appears to have been employed only to carry lumber to and from this saw and the planing-machine, were at work about the rip-saw. A new saw had been put in and a piece of lumber was placed upon the platform to be sawed, the saw set in motion and the lumber cut a few inches, when it was discovered that the platform should be lowered to accommodate the cutting height of the saw to the thickness of the lumber. The lumber was removed, and, without stopping the saw, an attempt was made to lower the platform. It was discovered that sawdust had accumulated on the framework below, so that the platform could not be lowered as required. The foreman then ordered the sawdust removed. It is not quite clear that this order was directed to the plaintiff, and it appears from his testimony that the removal of the sawdust was not within the scope of his employment. But assuming, as we do for the present purposes, that the order was directed to him, the plaintiff proceeded to execute it, and while thus engaged his hand came in contact with the moving saw, and as a result he received the injuries in question. The plaintiff had been employed about this machine some five or six weeks preceding the accident, and had been employed about the mill on former occasions, in all about six months. His testimony shows that he knew the saw was in motion when the order was given, and that he neither heard nor saw anything to indicate that it was to be stopped, or had been stopped, up to the time of the accident.

It is insisted that the facts stated bring this case within a rule stated in *Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co. v. McCarty*, 49 Neb. 475, which is as follows:

"When a master gives a servant a command requiring the doing of an act not within the usual scope of the servant's duty, which must be performed at once or not at all, without opportunity for deliberation, the servant is not charged with contributory negligence, even though

there may have been danger apparent to him in the performance of the act, unless the danger was so patent that a prudent man would not have obeyed."

The two cases are hardly parallel. In that case the order to the employee, who was a common laborer, was to board a moving train. It was one that had to be obeyed instantly, if at all, and left no opportunity for deliberation. It required the employee to perform the act, dangerous in itself, under the circumstances shown in the case, and obedience to it involved grave risk to the employee in spite of all precautions he could take for his own safety. In the case at bar, the precise act ordered was not of itself dangerous. It involved no risk of any consequence to one knowing the position of the saw and that it was in motion, and acting with due regard for his own safety. The order was not like that in the other case, which had to be obeyed instantly, if at all, but allowed time for deliberation, and the taking of due precautions by the employee to guard against injury. The plaintiff knew the position of the saw, and that it was in motion when the order was given. His evidence shows no reason for a belief on his part that it had been stopped. As a reasonable being, of mature years, he must have known the danger of coming in contact with it. Although within a few inches of the saw, and in a position where, by the slightest effort, he might have seen and known whether the saw was in motion, he did not look, and seems to have taken no steps whatever to inform himself. The answer charges the plaintiff with contributory negligence. As was said in the case just cited: "The test of contributory negligence in such cases, as in others, is whether the servant in obeying conducts himself as a man of ordinary prudence would conduct himself under the circumstances." Tested by that rule, the facts disclosed by plaintiff's own testimony show, in our opinion, such a degree of negligence on his part as to preclude a recovery, and that the court properly directed a verdict against him.

Complaint is made because the court excluded testimony

offered on behalf of the plaintiff to the effect that it was customary to stop the saw while adjusting the platform. It is not claimed that the plaintiff was aware of any such custom. On the contrary, his own evidence shows that he did not remember ever having seen the platform adjusted, save on this particular occasion. The evidence was offered for the purpose of showing negligence on the part of the defendant. But, while we do not pass upon that question, we may assume, for present purposes, that negligence on the part of the defendant is conclusively established, and yet the plaintiff is not entitled to recover because his own negligence, as it appears to us, was the proximate cause of his injury.

Complaint is also made because the court excluded certain evidence tending to show that the light in the room where the saw was operated was insufficient. The evidence would not have saved the case, had it been admitted, because the only reasonable inference to be drawn from the plaintiff's testimony is that he could have seen the saw, had he looked for it, and that he failed to see it simply because he failed to look. If there was any error in the exclusion of this testimony, it was error without prejudice.

It is also insisted that the court erred in refusing to permit the plaintiff to state what his belief was at the time of the accident, as to whether the saw was in motion or not. His mere unfounded belief as to a condition which caused the injury is wholly immaterial, where it appears that he might have known, and that a due regard for his own safety required him to know, the truth. To act upon such a belief in the face of the facts and circumstances within his knowledge would of itself be negligence.

The further complaint is made that the court refused to permit the plaintiff to read certain portions of a deposition of a witness taken and filed on behalf of the defendant. Without going into other matters urged in justification of the ruling on this point, it will suffice to say that the

Fryer v. Fryer.

evidence offered tended to prove nothing which we have not assumed in the discussion of this case, and nothing which, had it been admitted, could have changed the result.

It is recommended that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

CHARLES S. FRYER, APPELLEE, v. WILLIAM I. FRYER ET AL.,
APPELLEES; COLUMBIA NATIONAL BANK ET AL., APPEL-
LANTS.

FILED NOVEMBER 11, 1905. No. 13,971.

Mortgages: FORECLOSURE: EVIDENCE. The rule requiring evidence in support of the allegation, in a petition for the foreclosure of a mortgage, that no proceedings at law have been had, etc., is available to an attaching creditor resisting the foreclosure and plaintiff's claim of priority.

APPEAL from the district court for Lancaster county:
EDWARD P. HOLMES, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

Wilson & Brown and Sawyer & Snell, for appellants.

George A. Adams, contra.

ALBERT, C.

The plaintiff brought this suit to foreclose a mortgage which was given in the form of an absolute deed for the purpose of securing, as it is alleged in the petition, a certain indebtedness. The petition contains the usual allegation to the effect that no proceedings at law have been had for the recovery of the debt, or any part thereof. This allegation was put in issue by the appellants, the Columbia National Bank and the First National Bank,

Fryer v. Fryer.

who were among the parties defendant in the court below, each claiming a lien on the property, superior to that of the plaintiff, by virtue of certain attachments levied upon the mortgaged premises in actions instituted by them, respectively, against the principal mortgage debtor. The mortgagors made default. The court entered a decree of foreclosure, giving the mortgagee a first lien.

It is now claimed that there was a failure of proof on the negative proposition that no proceedings at law have been had for the recovery of his debt, or any part thereof. We have searched the record with more than usual care for evidence tending to support that proposition, and confess to an inability to find the slightest evidence tending in that direction. The plaintiff, however, contends that the rule requiring such proof does not apply to the appellants, who are not mortgagors, but merely claimants under attachment liens. This contention finds some slight support in dictum to be found in *Henry & Coatsworth Co. v. McCurdy*, 36 Neb. 863, where doubt is expressed as to whether an incumbrancer seeking to establish and foreclose his incumbrance in the same action, may invoke that rule, "the provision being," say the court, "for the benefit of the mortgagor." No authorities are cited in support of that position, nor was the point necessarily involved in that case. A different conclusion was reached in *Pratt v. Gallo-way*, 1 Neb. (Unof.) 168. A rehearing was had before another department, and the same conclusion reached in an opinion by OLDFHAM, C., concurred in by both of his associates. 1 Neb. (Unof.) 172. We are unable to discover, either in the statute requiring such averment, or the reason upon which such statute is based, any good reason for holding that the failure of proof thereon is available only to the mortgagor, or those claiming under him as grantees. That a failure of proof on this point is fatal, when the question is raised by the mortgagor or his grantees, is settled by numerous decisions of this court. It is equally fatal, we think, when raised by attaching creditors as in this case. *Plumber v. Park*, 62 Neb. 665.

The question of the sufficiency of the evidence to sustain the decree in other particulars is raised. But it would be unprofitable to go into that question, because whatever conclusion we should reach thereon would not change the recommendation which, in view of the entire record, we have agreed upon.

It is therefore recommended that the decree of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings according to law.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the decree of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings according to law.

REVERSED.

STATE OF NEBRASKA, EX REL. W. W. STEPHENS, ADMINISTRATOR, V. HOSMER H. HENDEE, COUNTY JUDGE.

FILED NOVEMBER 11, 1905. No. 14,321.

Mandamus is a discretionary writ, and it is no abuse of discretion to deny the writ, where its object is to compel the transfer of a trust fund from the custody of an official whose bond is sufficient to protect it to one whose bond is not sufficient for that purpose.

ERROR to the district court for Saline county: LESLIE G. HURD, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

R. M. Proudfit, F. I. Foss and R. D. Brown, for plaintiff in error.

A. S. Sands and Hall, Woods & Pound, contra.

ALBERT, C.

About the 10th of January, 1905, one George Smith, who had been living alone on his farm in Saline county, was found dead in his house. The coroner took possession of

the body and personal effects of the deceased. Among his personal effects were \$52.85 in cash, and a certificate of deposit for \$3,300 issued to him by the First National Bank of Friend. The coroner turned the personal effects over to the county judge of the county, who is the respondent in this proceeding. The following month, W. W. Stephens, the relator, was duly appointed administrator of the estate of the deceased, giving a bond which was fixed at \$500 and duly approved. On the same day he accompanied the county judge to the bank which had issued the certificate of deposit, and, for some reason which is not very clear, both he and the county judge indorsed the certificate in their respective official capacities, and the proceeds were placed to the credit of the county judge. Afterwards the relator came to the conclusion that he was entitled to the custody of the assets of the estate, and made a demand in writing on the county judge that all funds in possession of the latter be turned over to him. This demand was accompanied by an administrator's bond, signed by the relator and certain sureties, conditioned according to law. Both writings were delivered to the county judge, who refused to comply with the demand. The bond has not been approved, although its sufficiency is not called in question. Thereupon the relator applied to the district court for a writ of mandamus commanding the respondent to pay over the money in question, with interest. The district court denied the writ, and the cause is now here on error.

The application is grounded on the proposition that the county judge holds the money in his official capacity. Whether that proposition is sound is a question which would admit of some argument, and one upon which we do not undertake to pass, because, assuming the proposition to be true, we think the writ was properly denied. The writ of mandamus is a discretionary writ. *Moore v. State*, 71 Neb. 522; *Donahue v. State*, 70 Neb. 72; *Van Akin v. Dunn*, 117 Mich. 421; *People v. Jeroloman*, 139 N. Y. 14. In the last case the court said:

"A mandamus is only granted in the sound discretion

of the court. This discretion is not, of course, a capricious or arbitrary exercise of the power of the court to refuse relief even in a proper case. Where, however, it appears that with reference to the very question at issue the conduct of the party applying for the writ has been such as to render it inequitable to grant him relief by mandamus, the court may, in the exercise of its discretion, refuse the writ."

In the case at bar, the relator is an administrator acting under a \$500 bond, and seeks to compel the respondent to turn over to him as such administrator almost \$3,500, which he insists the respondent holds in his official capacity as county judge. If the latter thus holds the money, it is protected by his official bond, and, whatever the technical right of the relator to the possession of the money, a writ of mandamus should not issue to compel a transfer thereof from one whose official bond is presumably sufficient to protect it to one whose bond is obviously inadequate.

It is true that before this proceeding was instituted the relator tendered an additional bond in the sum of \$7,000 and the sufficiency of the sureties thereto are not questioned. But the law contemplates a judicial order fixing the amount of the bond in such cases, and the approval thereof by the county judge. There appears no order fixing the amount of an additional bond, nor does it appear that there was any order made requiring an additional bond. The additional bond has not been approved, nor does it seem that any demand has been made that it be approved. The present proceeding is brought, not to require the county court to fix the amount of an additional bond, or to approve the bond tendered, but to compel the county judge to pay over the funds.

We are satisfied that the writ was properly denied, and we recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

STATE OF NEBRASKA, EX REL. WILLIAM R. MELLOR, RELATOR,
V. D. C. GROW ET AL., RESPONDENTS.

FILED NOVEMBER 11, 1905. No. 14,392.

1. **Taxation: CORRECTION OF ASSESSMENTS.** Chapter 112, laws 1905, amendatory of section 121, article 1, chapter 77, Compiled Statutes 1903, authorizes a county board to correct "evident errors of assessment, or of apparent gross injustice, in over valuation or under valuation of real property," at any of its annual meetings, whether such errors or injustice be due to some act of the assessor or to that of the board itself.
2. **Petition: PARTIES.** The several owners of different tracts or lots of land may unite in a petition to the board for relief from such errors and injustice.
3. **Decision of County Board: CONCLUSIVENESS.** Where the county board has jurisdiction of the subject matter and the parties, and grants such relief, its orders in that behalf are not subject to review in a collateral proceeding, but are conclusive until set aside on error or appeal.

ORIGINAL application for a writ of mandamus to compel respondents to vacate certain orders reducing assessments for taxation. *Writ denied.*

Norris Brown, Attorney General, W. T. Thompson and R. J. Nightingale, for relator.

J. S. Pedler and H. M. Mathew, contra.

ALBERT, C.

This is an original application to this court for a writ of mandamus requiring the respondents, who constitute the board of equalization of Sherman county, to vacate certain orders, made by that body in 1905, at its annual meeting,

reducing the assessed valuation of certain real estate in that county, and the restoration of the original valuation thereof on the tax list. The lands were duly assessed, and the assessment duly acted upon by the board of equalization, in 1904. At the sitting of the board of equalization in 1905 four petitions, each describing several tracts of land and signed by the owners of the respective tracts, were presented to such board. The petitions allege, in substance, that there are evident errors of assessment, and gross injustice in overvaluation of the real estate described in the petitions "as valued and equalized by the board for the purpose of taxation" in 1904, and the relief sought in each case was a reduction of such valuation. Evidence was taken, and the board granted the relief prayed. The relator thereupon made due demand on the board for a vacation of the several orders granting relief to the petitioners, and for the restoration of the original valuation of their lands to the tax list. The latter demand was also made on the county clerk, who is ex officio a member of the board of equalization. The respondents severally refused to comply with the demands, whereupon the relator filed this application.

The case involves an examination of some of the provisions of what is commonly known as the revenue act of 1903, and which, as originally passed, constitutes chapter 77, Compiled Statutes 1903 (Ann. St. 10400-10643). Section 105, article I (Ann. St. 10504), of that chapter provides that "all real property in this state, subject to taxation, shall be assessed on the first day of April, 1904, and every fourth year thereafter, which assessment shall be used as basis of valuation for taxation until the next quadrennial assessment except as hereinafter provided." The exception, so far as this case is concerned, at least, refers exclusively to such changes as may be lawfully made by the board of equalization. Section 121 of the above chapter (Ann. St. 10520), relates to the sessions, powers and duties of the county board of equalization, and provides, among other things, that the board shall, "at its meeting

in the year 1904, and every fourth year thereafter, equalize the valuation of real property of the county by raising the valuation of such tracts and lots as are assessed too low, and by lowering the valuation of such tracts and lots as are assessed too high."

It will be observed that, under the provisions of the sections just referred to, the valuation of real estate, as returned by the assessor and acted upon and adopted by the board of equalization in 1904, aside from the right of appeal to the district court given by section 124 of the act (Ann. St. 10523) and the inherent power of the legislature to amend or repeal the law, was irrevocably fixed and settled until the next quadrennial assessment. But in 1905 an act to amend section 121, *supra*, was passed with an emergency clause, whereby the power of the county board to raise or lower the valuation of real property was enlarged, by inserting immediately after the sentence ending with the word "high," in the above quotation, the following: "But in cases of evident error of assessment or of apparent gross injustice in overvaluation or undervaluation of real property the county board of equalization may at any of its annual meetings consider and correct the same by raising, after due notice has been given to the interested party or parties, or by lowering the assessed valuation of such real property." Laws 1905, ch. 112, sec. 1. In short, as the law stood when the petitions in question were presented and acted upon, the county board had authority to correct "evident error of assessment or of apparent gross injustice in overvaluation or undervaluation of real property."

There is no dispute as to the law thus far, but the relator contends that the words "assessments" and "valuation," as used in the amendment of 1905, relate exclusively to the acts of the assessor, and; as the corrections in questions were of alleged "evident error of assessment and of apparent gross injustice in overvaluation of the land" as "valued and equalized" by the board itself in 1904, they were not within the amendment, and the board was without jurisdic-

tion to correct them at its annual meeting in 1905. This contention involves a narrower construction of the language of the amendment than we are disposed to give it. While the words "assessment" and "valuation" may be properly used to designate certain acts of the assessor, they are as properly, and more frequently, used to designate the official estimate of the value of property subject to taxation. While the assessor makes such official estimate, it is not conclusive, but is subject to revision by the county board of equalization, which body frequently substitutes its own estimate of the value of a particular portion of the property for that of the assessor. See sec. 121, *supra*. Consequently, the completed assessment or valuation of property, which forms the basis of taxation, includes, not only the estimates of the assessor, but also those of the board of equalization. There is nothing in the amendatory act which leads us to believe that the legislature used the two words in the restricted sense which the relator would give them. The act is remedial, and was intended to reach cases where, because of "evident error of assessment or of apparent gross injustice of overvaluation, or undervaluation," a taxpayer would bear more or less than his just share of the burden of taxation. The necessity for a remedy is just as urgent where the error or injustice is in the act of the board, as where it is in the act of the assessor, and it is not probable that the legislature lost sight of this necessity, nor that it intended to provide a remedy in the one class of cases and not in those of the other.

But the relator argues that any one aggrieved by any action of the board had already a remedy by appeal or error, consequently the amendment was not necessary to afford relief in that class of cases. But it is equally true that, without the amendment, one aggrieved by any act of the assessor could have such act reviewed by the board of equalization, and, failing there, could appeal to the district court. But these remedies were hardly adequate. Under the revenue act of 1903, real estate was to be as-

sessed in 1904, and every fourth year thereafter, and the acts of the assessor could be reviewed by the board and the assessments equalized by that body only at its quadrennial meetings. The assessment finally adopted by the board at such meetings as a basis for taxation would remain such basis for the next four years, unless corrected on appeal to the district court, which under the law had to be prosecuted within 20 days. Error was available for a longer period, but, as is well known, it is an unsatisfactory remedy in such cases. Through inadvertence or unavoidable accident the time for pursuing these remedies was frequently allowed to expire before the necessary steps were taken to make them available. Besides, cases might arise in which they would not be available under any circumstances, as where the buildings and improvements constituting the chief value of a particular piece of land were destroyed, or a comparatively worthless piece of land improved by the erection of costly buildings after the quadrennial meeting of the board. In each case the valuation adopted by the board as a basis for taxation, if just when adopted, would be grossly unjust after such changed condition of the property. As the law stood before the amendment, there was no remedy for cases of that kind, or for any other error or injustice in assessment or valuation, not jurisdictional, and they were required to stand until the next quadrennial assessment. It seems to us that the amendment was intended to mitigate such hardships, not by giving a remedy for every case of error or injustice, however slight, but for the class therein specified, whether the same are committed by the assessor or by the board itself.

By stipulation, and otherwise, an attempt is made to bring before this court the evidence taken before the county board at the hearing of the several petitions hereinbefore mentioned. But that evidence cannot be reviewed in this proceeding. The board had jurisdiction of the subject matter and the parties, and its orders in the premises are conclusive, and will be presumed to have been based on sufficient evidence, until reversed on appeal or error.

1 Desty, Taxation, p. 603.

Wendt v. Stewart.

Complaint is made that several property owners joined in one petition in each case. That is not a just ground of complaint. In cases of this kind, parties frequently, if not generally, act without an attorney, and technical exactness and nicety of pleading is neither expected nor required. The petitions are sufficient to confer jurisdiction, and that is sufficient where, as in this case, they are assailed collaterally.

It is recommended that the writ be denied.

DUFFIE and JACKSON, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the writ of mandamus is denied.

WRIT DENIED.

ERNEST WENDT V. NELLIE B. STEWART.

FILED NOVEMBER 11, 1905. No. 13,885.

Vendor and Purchaser: RIGHTS IN CROPS. Where, by the terms of a lease, rent is reserved in a share of the crops, the landlord and tenant are tenants in common of the growing crops, and in such case a purchaser of the real estate from the landlord during the term of the lease, in the absence of an agreement to the contrary, is not entitled to a portion of the crop belonging to the landlord which had been severed from the realty prior to the time he acquired title to the land upon which the crop was grown.

ERROR to the district court for Lancaster county: ALBERT J. CORNISH, JUDGE. *Reversed.*

Frederick Shepherd and Mockett & Polk, for plaintiff in error.

Stewart & Munger, contra.

JACKSON, C.

On the 6th day of August, 1902, J. J. Rankin and E. T. Buxton entered into a written contract with L. L. E. Stew-

art, whereby they agreed to sell to Stewart a tract of land in Lancaster county, and to convey the same by warranty deed upon the payment of \$2,500. From the record it is inferred that the legal title was in Rankin, but that Buxton had a beneficiary interest in the land. On the 12th day of August of that year, Rankin, joining with his wife, executed a warranty deed for the premises to Nellie B. Stewart, in whose behalf it would appear that L. L. E. Stewart was acting when the contract was made, and on the 22d day of October of that year, Buxton, joining with his wife, executed a quitclaim deed to Nellie B. Stewart, and from the stipulation appearing in the record it seems that the transaction was closed by the payment of the purchase money and the delivery of the deed on the 4th day of November of that year. At the time of the execution of the contract and the consummation thereof by the payment of the purchase money and the delivery of the deeds, Ernest Wendt was in possession of the real estate under a written lease from Rankin, terminating on March 1, 1903. The lease contained this provision: "And the said second party (Ernest Wendt), in consideration of the leasing of the above premises, hereby covenants and agrees with the party of the first part (J. Joseph Rankin) to pay the said party of the first part as rent for the same as follows, to wit: Two-fifths (2-5) of all the crops raised on said land, the same to be delivered in Emerald, Nebraska, during the rent period, at whatsoever place the first party may designate." Wendt disposed of the crop and paid the proceeds thereof to Rankin's agent, partly on December 18, 1902, and the balance on January 12, 1903. Nellie B. Stewart, the grantee in the deeds referred to, sued Wendt in the district court for Lancaster county for that portion of the proceeds of the crop paid to Rankin as rent, and recovered judgment, from which judgment Wendt prosecutes error.

The only question presented is whether or not the share of the crop reserved by the landlord in the lease to Wendt passed with the title to the land, there being no reserva-

tion in the deeds of conveyance, which were absolute in form. It is provided by section 1073 of the code: "In all cases where any lands may have been let, reserving rent in kind, and when the crops or emblements growing or grown thereon shall be levied on or attached, by virtue of any execution, attachment, or other process against the landlord or tenant, the interest of such landlord or tenant, against whom such process did not issue, shall not be affected thereby." Construing this section of the code, it was held in *Sims v. Jones*, 54 Neb. 769, that it was a distinct recognition by the legislature of the doctrine that the landlord and tenant are tenants in common of the growing crops, where rent is reserved in a share of the crops. The landlord, being a tenant in common with the tenant in the growing crops, becomes the owner of a share of the crops as soon as they are so far advanced that they may be said to be property. This rule would not be affected by that provision of the lease requiring the tenant to gather that portion of the crop belonging to the landlord. The landlord held the legal title to the land upon which the crop was grown until the consummation of the terms of the contract of sale, which, as we have shown, was on the 4th day of November, 1902, and, under the holding in *Yeazel v. White*, 40 Neb. 432, was, during that time, entitled to harvest and hold any portion of his share of the crops grown thereon that were in a proper condition for harvesting. In that case the conclusion was reached that the purchaser at a judicial sale did not acquire title to that portion of the crop severed from the realty before the confirmation of the sale, and such, without doubt, is the law in this state. As affecting that question, there seems to be no distinction in principle between the purchaser at a judicial sale and one who purchased directly from the holder of the title. It appears from the record that a portion of the crop, at least, had been severed from the realty before the title to the land passed from the landlord to the defendant in error and that the judgment in her favor included the value of that portion of the crop.

Brooks v. Stanley.

It follows, therefore, that the judgment of the district court was erroneous.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings in conformity with this opinion.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause remanded for further proceedings in conformity with this opinion.

REVERSED.

CALVIN J. BROOKS V. EDGAR C. STANLEY.

FILED NOVEMBER 11, 1905. No. 13,948.

A single assignment of error, covering several rulings of the trial court, in the following language: "Errors of law occurring at the trial and duly excepted to by the defendant, as follows, as shown on page 6," etc., *held* too general to call for consideration, especially where it appears, as in this case, that objections to one or more of the questions included in the assignment were properly overruled.

ERROR to the district court for Dawson county: HOMER M. SULLIVAN, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

Warrington & Stewart and G. W. Fox, for plaintiff in error.

H. M. Sinclair and E. A. Cook, *contra.*

JACKSON, C.

The defendant in error, hereinafter styled plaintiff, recovered judgment in the district court against the plaintiff in error, hereinafter styled defendant, for the possession of about half an acre of farm land. The controversy arose over a dispute about the location of a government corner. The defendant prosecutes error.

The first assignment of error covers the ruling of the trial court upon the objections of the defendant to some 12 different questions propounded to the plaintiff's witnesses, the exact language of the assignment being: "Errors of law occurring at the trial and duly excepted to by the defendant as follows, as shown on page 6," etc. This assignment of error is too general to call for consideration under the rule adopted and followed in this court, and will be disregarded, especially where it appears, as in this case, that objections to one or more of the questions included in the assignment were properly overruled. We are aware that a similar assignment was held good in *Darner v. Daggett*, 35 Neb. 695, but in a later opinion by the same author the rule of that case was especially disapproved. *Phoenix Ins Co. v. King*, 54 Neb. 630.

The second and third assignments of error are that the verdict is not sustained by sufficient evidence and is contrary to law. We have read the entire record, and from a consideration of all the evidence do not hesitate to say that the claim of the plaintiff, as to the place where the government corner was actually located, is sustained by an overwhelming weight of the evidence, and it is difficult to understand how a jury could arrive at any different conclusion from the one reached.

The giving of instructions 4, 5, 7 and 9 by the court on its own motion is also assigned as error. Instruction 4 is: "You are instructed that the real question in issue in this case is whether or not the strip of land in controversy belongs to the land described in plaintiff's petition, or whether it belongs to the land of the defendant, and it will be your duty to determine where the correct boundary line is between plaintiff's and defendant's property." It is complained of this instruction that it omits to advise the jury that it would be their duty to determine from the evidence where the correct boundary line is, but the instruction is not open to this criticism. It does not purport to be a rule of procedure. By the in-

struction the court defines the issue and informs the jury of the real question to be by them determined. They were, by later appropriate instructions, informed as to the burden of proof and the rules of law applicable to the determination of the controversy.

Instruction 5 is as follows: "The court instructs the jury that, in questions of boundary, natural objects, called for, marked lines, and reputed boundaries, well established, should be preferred, in ascertaining the identity of a tract of land, to the courses and distances of the calls of the grant." The complaint about this instruction is that it is not applicable to the testimony and tended to mislead the jury. This contention cannot be sustained. It appears from measurements made by surveyors subsequent to the government survey that the distances between section corners, as shown by the government field notes, do not correspond with actual measurements. On the other hand, the testimony is such as to leave no doubt that certain mounds, witness marks and stakes evidenced the actual location of government corners, and these mounds, witness marks and stakes must control over the courses and distances shown by the field notes. The early settlers established their lines corresponding with the location of such corners, marked their boundaries by rows of trees, and by common assent recognized the boundaries so established for many years—in fact, until the evidences of the corner in dispute were obliterated by the plow, except the remains of a cedar stake found later at a point where the plaintiff claims the government corner in dispute to have been located. In view of these facts, the instruction is held applicable to the evidence.

The first sentence of instruction 7 is: "If you find from the evidence that a quarter corner was in fact located by the government surveyor on the north side of section 18, then that corner will mark the plaintiff's and defendant's boundary, regardless of any excess that may exist in the survey of the whole north line." It is said that

Holthaus v. Adams County.

this sentence is misleading, because it is not broad enough under the evidence. It is a sufficient answer to say that, if the defendant was not satisfied with this instruction and desired one more specific, it was his privilege and duty to submit such an instruction to the court, with a request that it be given to the jury. This he did not do, and he cannot now be heard to complain of the instruction in question.

Through instruction 9 the court said to the jury: "You are instructed that, if you believe from the evidence that the line claimed by the plaintiff is the correct line, then you will find for the plaintiff." It is contended that this instruction is also too general. Our remarks relative to the objection to instruction 7 are equally applicable to the objection to instruction 9.

We find no error in the instructions complained of, and we recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

LOUIS C. HOLTHAUS, APPELLANT, v. ADAMS COUNTY ET AL.,
APPELLEES.

FILED NOVEMBER 11, 1905. No. 13,953.

1. **Taxation: EXEMPTIONS: PROPERTY ABANDONED FOR RELIGIOUS PURPOSES.** The abandonment of property formerly used exclusively for religious and educational purposes, with the intention of never again using the property for such purposes, together with the fact that since such abandonment the property has not been used for the purposes stated, or for any other purpose that would exempt it from taxation, renders such property liable to taxation from the time of such abandonment.

Holthaus v. Adams County.

2. **Tax List: EVIDENCE.** A tax list made in conformity with the provisions of the statute is *prima facie* evidence that a levy of taxes was made by the proper authorities, and is conclusive as against a claim of irregularities in making such levies.
3. **Taxes: COLLECTION.** The provisions of the revenue law of 1903, changing the method of procedure in the enforcement of the collection of taxes, are available for the collection of taxes delinquent prior to the time such revenue law went into effect.

APPEAL from the district court for Adams county: ED L. ADAMS, JUDGE. *Affirmed.*

Tibbets Bros. & Morey, for appellant.

F. P. Olmstead and W. F. Button, contra.

JACKSON, C.

This is an appeal from the district court for Adams county. The facts important to the inquiry are these: The order of Sisters of Visitation acquired by donation block 6 in Mumaw's addition to the city of Hastings, and erected thereon an academy building, which they used exclusively for educational and religious purposes from the year 1890 to November, 1896, when they abandoned the property with the intention of never again using it for the purpose stated. To aid in the erection of the building the order borrowed a large sum of money, and secured the payment of the same by mortgage covering said real estate. Since the abandonment of the property by the order of the Sisters of Visitation it has been unoccupied, except by a tenant of the mortgagee, who was permitted to live there without consideration, other than his services in the care of the property; the mortgagee having taken possession of the property upon its abandonment by the sisters. The plaintiff, appellant herein, succeeded to the rights of the mortgagee, and for several years made no effort to collect the debt secured by his mortgage, but finally instituted a proceeding wherein the mortgage was foreclosed, and through such proceeding acquired the legal title, which he now holds. From the years 1897 to 1902, both inclu-

sive, the assessor's books, as made up in the office of the county clerk of that county by an assistant employed in that office, contained a description of the real estate involved, and after such description the word, "exempt," written by the assistant. The assessor each year valued the property for the purpose of taxation and made due return thereof. The tax list, as made up by the county clerk each year, contained a description of the property, the valuation placed thereon by the assessor, and the several amounts of taxes, presumably corresponding with the levies made by the state, county and other municipal authorities. Opposite these entries on the tax list was written, by whom and when the record does not disclose, the word "exempt." For some of the years the mortgagee paid the tax imposed by the city of Hastings. All other taxes for those years are unpaid. At the tax sale, required by law to be held for the sale of all real property upon which taxes were delinquent, the county treasurer of Adams county, in the year 1903, offered said real estate for sale for all taxes delinquent thereon at that time, but the property was not sold for want of bidders. The word "exempt" was by some one erased from the tax lists. The plaintiff instituted this action in February, 1904, against the county of Adams, the treasurer of that county, and the city of Hastings, wherein he sought to have the taxes for the years stated decreed void, and to enjoin the defendants from attempting to enforce the collection thereof. The defendant city of Hastings interposed a demurrer to the petition, which was sustained, and the action dismissed as to that defendant. The county of Adams and its treasurer filed an answer and cross-petition, wherein they sought a foreclosure of the lien for the taxes during the controverted years. They also demurred to the plaintiff's petition. The plaintiff answered to the cross-petition. In the trial court the defendants' demurrer to the plaintiff's petition was sustained, and the cause proceeded to trial upon the cross-petition of the defendant and the answer thereto. The

trial resulted in a decree sustaining the validity of the taxes and foreclosing the lien, as prayed. Plaintiff appealed, and the case is now here for review.

The contention of the appellant is that the property was exempt from taxation during the controverted years, and that under the evidence, even though it be held that the property was subject to taxation, the decree cannot be sustained. The first contention involves a construction of the constitutional and statutory provisions relative to the exemption of property in this state from taxation. The constitutional provision (art. IX, sec. 2) is: "The property of the state, counties, and municipal corporations, both real and personal, shall be exempt from taxation, and such other property as may be used exclusively for agricultural and horticultural societies, for school, religious, cemetery and charitable purposes, may be exempted from taxation, but such exemptions shall be only by general law." It is provided by statute (Comp. St. 1903, ch. 77, art. I, sec. 13; Ann St. 10412): "The following property shall be exempt from taxation: First, all property of the state, counties, and municipal corporations. Second, such other property as may be used exclusively for agricultural and horticultural societies, for schools, religious, cemetery and charitable purposes." The construction of these provisions was involved in the case of *Scott v. Society of Russian Israelites*, 59 Neb. 571. The first paragraph of the syllabus in that case is:

"Property used directly, immediately and exclusively for religious purposes is exempt from taxation, without regard to the question of absolute ownership."

Mr. Justice NORVAL, who delivered the opinion of the court, in commenting upon the constitutional and statutory provisions quoted above, said:

"The language of the provisions quoted is plain. There is exempt from taxation all property used exclusively for religious purposes. It is the exclusive use for the purpose named which determines whether the property is subject to the burden of taxation or not."

In support of this contention he quoted largely from *Washburn College v. Commissioners of Shawnee County*, 8 Kan. 344. The law of Kansas is similar to our own, and Mr. Justice Brewer, in the opinion in that case said:

"To bring this property within the terms of the section quoted it must be 'used exclusively for literary and educational purposes.' This involves three things—first, that the property is used; second, that it is used for educational purposes; and third, that it is used for no other purpose."

The conclusion reached in that case was that certain real estate, owned by an educational society, and purchased with a view of thereafter erecting buildings thereon to be used for educational purposes, but not yet improved or used for that purpose, was not exempt from taxation under the laws of Kansas. With the reasoning in that case we agree, and, applying the principle there involved to the case at bar, it seems clear that, from the time the order of the Sisters of Visitation abandoned the property, with the purpose of never again using it for educational and religious purposes, the property was subject to taxation, and taxes might be lawfully levied and assessed thereon.

It is claimed on the part of the appellant that the mortgage was made and allowed to run in reliance upon the exemption of said premises from taxation. His position in that respect is untenable. The mortgagee may have contracted with the mortgagor that the property should continue to be used for educational and religious purposes during the period covered by his mortgage, although the existence of any such agreement or understanding is denied by the sisters having the institution in charge, but such contract cannot avoid the effect of our revenue law, or exempt the property from taxation, except as the contracting parties should keep themselves within the provisions of the statute relative to the exemption of property from taxation. It is argued that the statute invites the investment of money in educational institutions for the public benefit, and exempts such property from taxa-

Holthaus v. Adams County.

tion, and that, once so invested, the protection of the statute should not be removed until such institution is devoted to other purposes. It is a sufficient answer to say that the protection of the statute has never been removed. The law remains the same, and the appellant, by taking advantage of its privileges, might have continued the property within its terms, but there is no pretense that the appellant, from the time he took possession of the property, ever contemplated using it for religious or educational purposes. On the contrary, the evidence discloses that he held it with a view of some time disposing of it to some one who might use it for that purpose.

The next contention involves two questions. It is averred in the cross-petition that taxes were legally assessed and levied on the property during each of the years in question. The answer to the cross-petition is a general denial, and the only evidence that taxes were in fact levied on the property during those years was the tax lists in the hands of the county treasurer. It is the contention of the appellant that the tax lists are not sufficient evidence that a levy was in fact made. With this contention we cannot agree. A tax list is a public record required to be made by the county clerk, and in which he is required to transcribe the several assessments, and to enter into distinct columns the description of lands and lots and values, and each description of tax, and to apportion the tax among the respective funds to which it belongs according to the number of mills levied for each of said funds, showing a summary of each distinct tax. The tax list, so completed, with the warrant of the clerk attached, is the source of the treasurer's authority to enforce the collection thereof, and is *prima facie* evidence, at least, that levies were made corresponding with the entries therein, and if, as contended by appellant, no such levies were in fact made, it was incumbent upon him to offer some proof to overcome the presumption arising out of the introduction of the tax list in evidence. The case of *Merrill v. Wright*, 41 Neb. 351, cited in support of the contention of the appel-

lant, in so far as it holds that, to uphold the validity of a tax lien sought to be foreclosed, neither the levy nor assessment of taxes will be presumed from the mere introduction in evidence of a treasurer's certificate of purchase at a tax sale, where the existence of such levy and assessment have been put in issue by the answer, is expressly overruled in the case of *Ure v. Reichenberg*, 63 Neb. 899. Furthermore, the exact claim of the appellant is not that no levy was made by the proper authorities, but that no levy was made as against this property, and in support of that contention the fact is cited that at one time there appeared on the tax lists the word "exempt," and that the property was treated as exempt by the county treasurer until the year 1900, when the county treasurer carried forward the amount of the unpaid tax as being delinquent. The question of whether the property was exempt from taxation or not is a question of law, and not one resting in the discretion of a county treasurer. The course followed by the county treasurer in that respect, and the entry of the word "exempt," would at most be mere irregularities, and as against such irregularities the court will regard the amount of the taxes against the property in question, as borne upon the books of the county, as unalterably established.

The remaining question is the right of the county to foreclose its tax lien without having first bid the property in and obtained a tax sale certificate, and it is conceded that this contention is well taken under the authority of *Logan County v. Carnahan*, 66 Neb. 685, unless the right exists by virtue of the provisions of the revenue law of 1903. The provision of the new revenue law under which appellees seek to sustain the decree is found in section 231, article I, chapter 77, Compiled Statutes, 1903 (Ann. St. 10630), and is as follows: "Every county in this state shall have a lien upon each tract or lot of land for all taxes due thereon whether such taxes are for one or more years, or are due to the state, county, township, school district, road district, city, village or other municipal subdivisions

Kansas City & O. R. Co. v. State.

of said county, and may, at any time after such tract or lot of land has been offered for sale for such taxes or any part thereof and not sold for want of bidders, proceed to foreclose said lien and cause said tract or lot to be sold for the satisfaction thereof in the same manner and with like effect as if such lien were a mortgage for the amount thereof executed to said county by the owner of said tract or lot of land." This provision was in force from and after September 1, 1903, and relates solely to the procedure to be adopted by the county to enforce its lien, and was, in our judgment, available to the appellees for the enforcement of the collection of the taxes in question.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be affirmed.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is

AFFIRMED.

KANSAS CITY & OMAHA RAILWAY COMPANY V. STATE OF
NEBRASKA, EX REL. KEARNEY COUNTY.

FILED NOVEMBER 11, 1905. No. 13,982.

Highways: Prescription. To establish a public highway by prescription there must be a continuous user by the public, under a claim of right distinctly manifest by some appropriate act on the part of the public authorities, for a period equal to that required to bar an action for the recovery of title to land. *Lewis v. City of Lincoln*, 55 Neb. 1.

ERROR to the district court for Kearney county: Ed L. ADAMS, JUDGE. *Reversed and dismissed.*

J. W. Deweese, J. L. McPheely and Frank B. Bishop,
for plaintiff in error.

Lewis C. Paulson, contra.

JACKSON, C.

The county of Kearney instituted an action against the Kansas City & Omaha Railway Company to compel the railway company to put in a crossing at a point where it was alleged that the company's right of way crossed a public highway. In the petition it was alleged that the company's railway crossed a public highway in the county of Kearney and state of Nebraska, said highway being on section line lying to the east of the southeast quarter of section 24, township 6, range 13; that the railway company had been notified by the supervisor of the road district, in which it was alleged that the road was situated, to put in a crossing over its right of way at the point where the public highway crossed the company's right of way; that the company had refused to comply with the requirements of the notice and to put the crossing in, as requested. By the company's answer the existence of a public highway along the section line in question was put in issue. Upon the trial there was a finding for the relator, and a peremptory writ of mandamus was allowed to compel the construction of the crossing. The railway company prosecutes error, and contends that the evidence does not sustain the judgment.

It appears from the evidence that the section line in question is part of the county line between the counties of Adams and Kearney, and there is no pretense that any action was ever taken on the part of the authorities of either county to establish a public highway along this line, and the only evidence that a public highway did in fact exist there was brought out in an effort to establish the existence of such highway by user. It appears that the company's railway was built across the section line in question in the year 1887, and that at the point where it crosses the alleged public highway there is a fill of 14 feet, and that, at least since the railway was built, no one has traveled the section line at the point where it is crossed by the railway. The railway extends

from the east to the west, and on the south of the railway for several years the section line for one-half mile has been fenced in pasture, and is not open for travel. It is evident that, prior to the time the railway was built, the land on either side of the section line was open prairie, and the country sparsely settled.

Concerning the use of the section-line as a public highway, W. A. King testified on behalf of the plaintiff that in the year 1903 he was the road overseer in road district No. 11 in May township, Kearney county; that for some distance both north and south of the railway the alleged public highway was in his district; that the railway crossed the section line in a kind of a draw; that there was a 12 or 14 foot fill; that the next section line north of the railway was a little over half a mile; that the section line for about 60 or 70 rods on the north had been traveled for about 23 years, and that then they angled off into the hills; that it had been traveled clear down to the railway track; and that it was impossible to cross the railway at that point. On cross-examination he testified that the last time he was along that line was in the fall of 1903; that at that time he could travel down to the fill; that he had not crossed the railway track, nor had any one else, since it had been laid there; that he had never seen any one else travel the section line, but that there was a traveled road there on the north; that the section line was fenced on the south of the railway, and had never been worked as a road; that, prior to the time the railway was built they did not travel down through the swale where the railway crosses; that there was no fence in there, and they traveled 60 or 70 rods on the line, and then they angled off into the hills southeast, and they did not travel across where the railway now is. Carl Norman testified that he had been acquainted with the section line in question for about six years; that he had seen people come down the section line to the railway and turn around and go back; that he had seen them turn out to the west to strike the railway gate and cross down through, and that

he had seen them turn east and take down the fence and go through. E. E. Canfield testified that he lived not quite a mile from the crossing; that, before the railway was built, nearly two-thirds of the section line along section 24 was traveled a considerable; that he went through there often himself; that there was nothing to hinder them from going in either direction from the section line; that he had traveled through there for 24 years, and that there was a fence extending across the section line south of the railway and another fence about half a mile south of that. Carl Bjorklund testified that he lived in Kearney county for 26 years; that as to the section line east of section 24 he saw a road there about 1882, 1883 and 1884; he crossed over to Juniata and Hastings. When asked as to travel since that time, he said: "Well, I see last winter the people hauled straw on the field where I am working, right by the road there, and they had to angle out over the pasture and out through Sand creek. He took out two straw stacks there, and I had to go there four times, and had to crawl through the wire and take the wire down and hang them up." George Cobb testified that he did not know the conditions that existed prior to the time that the railway was built; that for 12 years the road had been traveled north of the railway track; that there had been no travel south on the section line, except when he traveled up there once in a while fixing the fence, and that there was a pretty fair road north of the railway track.

That is the substance of the evidence offered on behalf of the plaintiff to establish the existence of a public highway across the railway track at the place in dispute, and it falls far short of being sufficient to justify a court in finding that there was, in fact, a public highway there. The existence of a public road may be shown by user alone, but only within certain well defined rules.

"To establish a highway by prescription there must be a continuous user by the public under a claim of right, distinctly manifested by some appropriate action on the part of the public authorities, for a period equal to that

required to bar an action for the recovery of title to land." *Lewis v. City of Lincoln*, 55 Neb. 1.

To establish the existence of a legal public road over the premises of a private person by user alone, it must appear that the user was with the knowledge of the owner. *Graham v. Hartnett*, 10 Neb. 517. In this case there is an absolute lack of evidence that the public authorities ever improved the line in question as a public highway, or exercised any control or dominion over it, or made any claim that a highway did in fact exist, until the supervisor of the road district in April, 1903, attempted to serve a notice on the railway company to construct a crossing at the point where the railway crossed the section line. It is true that a witness testified that on the section line north of the railway a culvert had been constructed, but when, or by whom, the evidence does not disclose. There is no evidence of the use of the section line as a public highway with the knowledge or consent of the owners of the abutting property, or of such use even adverse to the abutting property owners; and from a consideration of the whole evidence it is evident that the use of such section line as a public highway was limited to the early settlement in that community, and up to the time when the owners began to inclose their land for pasture, or improve the same for other purposes.

Under such circumstances, a writ of mandamus should not issue for the purpose sought in this action.

We recommend that the judgment of the district court be reversed and the cause dismissed.

DUFFIE and ALBERT, CC., concur.

By the Court: For the reasons stated in the foregoing opinion, the judgment of the district court is reversed and the cause dismissed.

REVERSED.

INDEX.

Adverse Possession.

1. Where a husband in adverse possession of land dies, the possession of the widow may be tacked to that of the husband so as to raise the bar of the statute of limitations. *Larson v. Anderson* 361
2. The possession of the widow of one in adverse possession of land is a continuation of the adverse possession of the husband, and will not be presumed to be adverse to the claims of their children and heirs. *Larson v. Anderson*... 361
3. The widow's right to possession of land of her deceased husband is not hostile to that of her husband's heirs, unless she notifies them that she claims it in her own right. *Larson v. Anderson*..... 361

Appeal and Error. See ATTORNEY AND CLIENT, 2. CONTEMPT, 1. COUNTIES AND COUNTY OFFICERS, 6. CRIMINAL LAW. EXCEPTIONS, BILL OF. INJUNCTION, 3. INSURANCE, 7. INTOXICATING LIQUORS, 5, 6. JUSTICE OF THE PEACE. MALICIOUS PROSECUTION. TRIAL.

Bond.

1. It is not error to allow the filing of an amended appeal bond. *McGinnis v. Johnson Co.*..... 356
2. Supersedeas denied. *Prante v. Lompe*..... 210

Evidence.

3. Admission of evidence in action based on fraud, held not prejudicial. *McKibbin v. Day*..... 424
4. Admission of evidence in an action for damages caused from overflow, held not prejudicial. *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Mitchell*..... 563
5. Evidence in an action on a liquor license bond, held sufficient to require the submission of the question of conspiracy to assault plaintiff to the jury. *Quist v. American B. & T. Co.*..... 692

Instructions.

6. Where a case has been reversed and remanded, with directions to submit certain issues to the jury, and is tried a second time on the same issues, the supreme court, on a

Appeal and Error—Continued.

- second appeal, will examine the correctness of the instructions. *Morrill v. McNeill*..... 291
7. Refusal to instruct that the party alleging negligence has the burden of proving it, *held* erroneous. *Lincoln Traction Co. v. Shepherd*..... 374
8. An instruction which withdraws from the jury an issue of fact concerning which there is a conflict of evidence is erroneous. *Hensel v. Hoffman*..... 383
9. Instructions in an action based on fraud, *held* not prejudicial. *McKibbin v. Day*..... 424
10. Instructions in an action against a railroad company for causing overflow approved. *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Mitchell* 563
11. An instruction to the effect that, if the jury found that defendant had ratified a settlement, they should find for plaintiff, failed to state what acts amount to a ratification. *Held* erroneous. *Morrill v. McNeill*..... 291

Law of Case.

12. A point necessarily determined on appeal becomes the law of the case. *First Nat. Bank v. Gibson*..... 236
13. Where on appeal a petition is held to state a cause of action as against a general demurrer, this ruling becomes the law of the case on a second appeal unless objected to in the district court. *First Nat. Bank v. Gibson*..... 236

Practice and Review.

14. Errors occurring at the trial will not be reviewed, unless presented to the trial court by a motion for a new trial. *Hanson v. Nathan*..... 288
15. A motion for a new trial is not necessary to a review of a judgment of the district court on an appeal from the order of a license board granting or refusing license to sell intoxicating liquors. *Lee v. Brittain*..... 591
16. Where a case is tried on the theory that the pleadings present a certain issue, the supreme court will not examine the pleadings to determine their sufficiency to clearly make the issue. *Morrill v. McNeill*..... 291
17. A petition in error will not be dismissed on motion for want of a bill of exceptions, where the only question is one of law, and it is presented by a transcript of the proceedings of the lower court. *Johnson v. Emerick*..... 303
18. On appeal for trial *de novo*, an error in compelling appellant to elect on which of two causes of action he would proceed cannot be corrected. *Webber v. Ingersoll*..... 393
19. Where one relies on a variance, unless the question is

Appeal and Error—Concluded.

- raised during the trial, it will not be considered on error.
Spencer v. Wilson..... 459
20. Where the transcript does not show a final judgment, the proceedings in error will be dismissed. *Wall v. Kerr*..... 603
21. Where the transcript does not contain the judgment or final order to be reviewed, the petition in error will be dismissed. *Modern Woodmen of America v. Plummer*..... 711
22. A single assignment of error covering several rulings, held too general, where objections to one or more of the questions included in the assignment were properly overruled. *Brooks v. Stanley*..... 858

Transcript.

23. In proceedings in error, the plaintiff must file a transcript of the proceedings of the lower court with his petition in error, and the original papers cannot be used as a substitute therefor. *Smith v. Delane*..... 594

Verdict.

24. A verdict will not be set aside for want of evidence, unless the want is so great as to show that the verdict is manifestly wrong. *Union P. R. Co. v. Fickenscher*..... 497
Fitch v. Martin..... 538
25. An appellate court will not set aside a verdict for want of evidence, if there is sufficient evidence to have supported a judgment by default, unless the evidence against the verdict is so strong as to indicate that the verdict must have been predicated upon something other than the evidence. *Union P. R. Co. v. Fickenscher*..... 507
26. When the answer fails to state a defense, but admits plaintiff's cause of action, and the verdict and judgment are supported by the petition, errors occurring at the trial are without prejudice. *Miller v. Loverens & Browns Co*..... 557

Appearance. See PROCESS, 2.

Filing a motion for a new trial constitutes an appearance.

- Tootle-Weakley M. Co. v. Billingsley*..... 531

Attorney and Client.

1. An attorney has a lien for services and disbursements on moneys received on his client's behalf, though the client is an executor or trustee and the services were on behalf of the estate. *Burleigh v. Palmer*..... 122
2. Where a client agrees to pay a certain amount in consideration of the release of an attorney's lien, and suit is brought upon such agreement, held that evidence of the amount of the attorney's services or the terms of employment was properly rejected. *Burleigh v. Palmer*..... 123

Attorney and Client—Concluded.

3. A contract between an attorney and client is not necessarily invalid because part of the services to be rendered is the procurement of legislative action, nor because such contract provides for a contingent fee. *Stroemer v. Van Ordel* 132, 143
4. A contract between attorney and client will be enforced, unless unlawful means are contemplated or employed in its execution. *Stroemer v. Van Ordel*..... 132, 143

Bankruptcy.

1. A trustee in bankruptcy succeeds to the bankrupt's title to choses in action, subject to any defense to which they would have been liable in the hands of the latter. *Nebraska Mohr's Plow Co. v. Blackburn*..... 246
2. A trustee in bankruptcy, acting for creditors, may maintain a creditor's bill without reducing the claims of the creditors to judgment. *Shreck v. Hanlon*..... 264
3. The question of fraud in conveyances made prior to July 1, 1898, could not be determined in a hearing on application by a bankrupt for his discharge. *Shreck v. Hanlon*..... 264
4. A vendee who borrows money to purchase land, pledging the land for its payment, held to take merely the equitable title, subject to a lien in favor of the lender, and that his trustee in bankruptcy has no better position. *Beer v. Wiener*, 437
5. A party against whom a judgment has been rendered in favor of the trustee of a bankrupt may, by proper proceedings in equity, offset against it a claim allowed in his favor in the bankruptcy proceedings. *Tootle-Weakley M. Co. v. Billingsley* 531
6. Evidence in an action by a trustee in bankruptcy to recover a preference, held to sustain the judgment. *Hargreaves Bros. v. Hackney*..... 700
7. Instructions in an action by a trustee in bankruptcy to recover a preference, held not prejudicial. *Hargreaves Bros. v. Hackney*..... 700

Banks and Banking.

1. Damages to a national bank for misfeasance or mismanagement of its officers are assets of the bank, recoverable only by the bank or for the benefit of the stockholders and creditors. *Yates v. Jones Nat. Bank*..... 734
2. The officers of a national bank are personally liable under the common law for false reports made and published by them. *Yates v. Jones Nat. Bank*..... 734
3. It is no defense to an action against officers of a national bank for making false reports that such reports were made

Banks and Banking—Concluded.

- without knowledge of their falsity. *Yates v. Jones Nat. Bank* 734
4. Evidence in an action against officers of a national bank for misfeasance, *held* to sustain the findings. *Yates v. Jones Nat. Bank*..... 734
5. An assignee of negotiable paper after maturity takes it subject to defenses. *May v. First Nat. Bank*..... 251

Bonds. See APPEAL AND ERROR, 1.

- It is essential to a recovery on a bond to plead a breach of the condition. *Lancaster County v. Fitzgerald*..... 433

Carriers. See EVIDENCE, 16, 18. STREET RAILWAYS.

1. In an action for damages against a street railway company, where plaintiff alleges negligence, which is denied, defendant is not required to disprove negligence by a preponderance of evidence. *Lincoln Traction Co. v. Shepherd*.. 369
2. Where, in an action against a carrier for personal injury, it appears that some defect in appliances or act of its employees contributed to the injury, a presumption of negligence arises, and unless rebutted establishes negligence of the carrier. *Lincoln Traction Co. v. Shepherd*..... 374
3. In the absence of evidence as to the class, condition and price of live stock, damages cannot be awarded for a decline in price against a carrier negligently refusing to accept and transport it. *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Todd*..... 712
4. Where a railroad company negligently refuses to receive and transport live stock it is liable in damages. *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Todd*..... 712

Clerks of Courts. See PENALTIES.

1. Where before the act (laws 1899, ch. 31) amendatory of sec. 3, ch. 28, Comp. St. 1903, limiting the salary of clerks of district courts, a clerk collected fees for making complete records, but died before such records were made, and after said act went into effect his successor made these records and received fees therefor from his predecessor's representatives; in an action by the county on the official bond of such successor, *held*, that he was properly chargeable with such fees. *Boettcher v. Lancaster County*..... 148
2. Under ch. 31, laws 1899, a clerk of the district court is required to account for fees earned by him as a member of the board of commissioners of insanity. *Boettcher v. Lancaster County*..... 148
3. Under ch. 31, laws 1899, the clerk of the district court is required to account for fees earned by him for official serv-

Clerks of Courts—Concluded.

- ices, whether collected or not. *Boettcher v. Lancaster County* 148
4. The clerk of the district court is not required to account for fees collected by him for services rendered by his predecessor before ch. 31, laws 1899, went into effect. *Boettcher v. Lancaster County*..... 148

Common Law.

By statute, so much of the common law of England as is applicable and not inconsistent with the constitution of the United States or the constitution and statutes of this state is in force in this state. *Kinkead v. Turgeon*..... 580

Constitutional Law. See ELECTIONS, 4-6. STATUTES, 4, 5. TAXATION, 2.

1. Where portions of an act were the inducement for its passage, and such parts are unconstitutional, the act is void in toto. *State v. Galusha*..... 188
2. Provisions found in the schedule of the constitution are not in all instances to be construed as of a temporary character, and the language used should be given its ordinary meaning. *State v. Galusha*..... 188
3. Courts will give weighty consideration to the legislative construction of the constitution when legislation is had regarding subjects of a political nature. But when such construction clearly appears to be unwarranted it will not be followed. *State v. Galusha*..... 188
4. The provisions of the biennial election law (laws 1905, ch. 65) are in conflict with the constitution relative to the election of judicial officers and regents of the university. *State v. Galusha*..... 188
5. Sec. 11, art. III of the constitution, requiring the subject of an act to be clearly expressed in the title, is complied with if the subject is manifest from the language of the title, a recital in detail being not indispensable. *Alperson v. Whalen*..... 680
6. The title of ch. 93, laws 1901, which provides penalties for blackmail, meets the requirements of sec. 11, art. III of the constitution. *In re Algae*..... 353
7. The provisions of secs. 12 and 13 (laws 1905, ch. 76) relating to the election of city aldermen, held valid. *State v. Malone*, 645
8. The provision in sec. 12, ch. 76, laws 1905, for an election of city aldermen is not special legislation inhibited by the constitution, because one city only comes under the operation of the law. *State v. Malone*..... 645

Constitutional Law—Concluded.

9. Ch. 47, laws 1905, providing for biennial elections, held unconstitutional. *State v. Plasters*..... 652
10. Ch. 14, laws 1887, relating to cities of the second class, being amendatory of ch. 14, laws 1885, which has been held void, is also invalid. *City of Plattsmouth v. Murphy*..... 749
11. Ch. 189, laws 1903, an act to prevent the use of the flag for advertising, does not deprive one of his property without due process of law, and is not class legislation. *Halter v. State* 757
12. Notwithstanding the fourteenth amendment to the federal constitution, the state in the exercise of police power may enact laws to promote the health, comfort, safety and welfare of society. *Halter v. State*..... 757
13. Whether legislation is calculated to promote the health, comfort, safety and welfare of society is a legitimate subject of inquiry by the court, when the constitutionality of the act is assailed. *Halter v. State*..... 757
14. An act which is calculated to foster sentiments of patriotism is not vulnerable to the objection that it is not calculated to promote the welfare of society. *Halter v. State*..... 757

Contempt. See INJUNCTION, 1-3.

1. A judgment in a summary proceeding for contempt may be reviewed without a motion for a new trial. *Orites v. State*, 687
2. Presumptions and intendments will not be indulged in to sustain convictions for contempt of court. *Orites v. State*... 687
3. In a contempt proceeding, a recital that defendant is guilty of contemptuous behavior is a mere conclusion, and insufficient to show that the offense was in fact committed. *Orites v. State*..... 687

Contracts. See ATTORNEY AND CLIENT, 3, 4. COUNTIES AND COUNTY OFFICERS, 1-3.

1. Where a written order for threshing machinery contains a condition that it shall not be binding until accepted, the signer of the order is not bound until its acceptance. *Robinson & Co. v. Ralph*..... 55
2. While public policy forbids the enforcement of illegal contracts, it insists on the enforcement of lawful contracts. *Stroemer v. Van Orsdel*..... 132
3. One cannot recover damages for breach of contract, where the failure to comply was his own. *Apking v. Hoefer*.... 325
4. One basing a claim on a contract must accept it in its entirety. *Beer v. Wisner*..... 437
5. A contract should be construed in the light of surrounding

Contracts—Concluded.

- circumstances and the condition of the parties at the time of making it. *Fiscus v. Wilson*..... 444
6. Where parties to a contract have, with a knowledge of its terms, given it a particular construction, such construction will generally be adopted by the courts. *Fiscus v. Wilson*.. 444
7. Where a contract of employment by the year has been entered into for a definite period, continued service thereafter will be presumed to have been performed under the original contract. *Fitch v. Martin*..... 538

Corporations.

1. A notice by publication was directed to "The Globe Investment Company," the true name of the corporation being "Globe Investment Company." Held, that the variance was immaterial. *Clifford v. Thun*..... 831
2. In an action against a corporation on a contract, the presumption is that the contract is *intra vires* and that the officers executing it acted within the law, unless the petition states facts showing the contrary. *Willow Springs Irrig. Dist. v. Wilson*..... 269
3. Where a claim has been disallowed by the auditing board of a corporation, an original action may be instituted on the claim, in the absence of a statute directing other proceedings to enforce it. *Willow Springs Irrig. Dist. v. Wilson*... 269
4. Contracts of a corporation to furnish the services of licensed physicians for an agreed compensation are not prohibited by statute nor against public policy, and the corporation may recover for services furnished pursuant to such contracts. *State Electro-Medical Inst. v. Platner*..... 23
5. Qualified and licensed physicians may form a corporation; and making contracts for the services of its members and other licensed physicians is not a violation of sec. 7, ch. 55, Comp. St., forbidding the practice of medicine without a license. *State Electro-Medical Inst. v. State*..... 40

Costs. See PARTITION.

Making payment of costs in an action dismissed a prerequisite to the prosecution of another rests in the discretion of the trial court. *Yates v. Jones Nat. Bank*..... 724

Counties and County Officers. See TAXATION, 5-8. WASTE.

1. A contract by a county for constructing a ditch, not begun, is a contract not completed within the time specified, under sec. 20, art. I, ch. 89, Comp. St. *Gutschow v. Washington County*..... 378
2. Under sec. 20, art. I, ch. 89, Comp. St., that a bidder on a

Counties and County Officers—Concluded.

- contract with a county is the only bidder, does not render the contract illegal. *Gutschow v. Washington County*..... 378
3. A bid for ditch construction which proposes "to construct, excavate and complete by working sections" at a fixed price responds to a notice requiring bids "by each working section." *Gutschow v. Washington County*..... 378
4. If money of the state in the Lands of a county treasurer is deposited in a depository bank and lost, the treasurer cannot use the money of the county to make good the loss; and his action in doing so without authority from the county board will not estop the county to recover the money from the state. *Lancaster County v. State*..... 215
5. A county is competent to sue for the enforcement of all contracts and obligations in its behalf, unless the statute expressly provides otherwise. *Johnson County v. Chamberlain Banking House*..... 549
6. In an action for damages against a county, an instruction as to contributory negligence, held prejudicially erroneous. *Ollingan v. Dixon County*..... 807

Courts.

The district court is a court of general jurisdiction and may send its original process to any part of the state, unless restricted by statute. *Eager v. Eager*..... 827

Covenants.

A married woman is not bound by the covenants in a deed or mortgage made for the sole purpose of releasing her dower interest. *Pochin v. Conley*..... 429

Creditors' Suit. See BANKRUPTCY, 2. EVIDENCE, 13.

1. A judgment creditor, with the aid of equity, may reach any property or interest of his debtor not exempt from execution. *Weckerly v. Taylor*..... 84
2. One cannot maintain a creditor's suit before judgment on his claim, hence, until a judgment is obtained the statute of limitations will not run against such a suit. *Ainsworth v. Roubal*..... 723
3. A creditor may, before judgment, attach an estate fraudulently conveyed, and, after judgment, enforce his lien by a creditor's suit. *Ainsworth v. Roubal*..... 723
4. Where a conveyance is set aside as fraudulent and the land is insufficient to pay the judgment, the fraudulent grantee may be compelled to apply on the judgment the rents which accrued while the land was in his possession. *First Nat. Bank v. Gibson*..... 236

Criminal Law. See CONSTITUTIONAL LAW, 6. **EMBEZZLEMENT.**
HOMICIDE. **INDICTMENT AND INFORMATION.** **LARCENY.** **RAPES.**

Evidence.

1. One cannot be convicted of a felony upon his own unsupported extrajudicial confession that a crime has been committed. *Blacker v. State*..... 671
2. Evidence in a prosecution for uttering a forged deed, *held* insufficient to support the verdict. *Blacker v. State*..... 671
3. Matters of common observation are not matters for expert medical testimony; but it is not in all cases reversible error to allow a witness to testify to a fact of science or nature which is a matter of common knowledge. *Turley v. State*.. 471
4. It is not error to refuse a new trial for newly discovered evidence, if the proposed evidence might have been produced upon the trial or is cumulative. *Turley v. State*..... 471
5. Evidence in a prosecution for larceny, *held* insufficient to sustain the verdict. *Ladeaux v. State*..... 19

Instructions.

6. An instruction is not prejudicially erroneous which states only a part of the elements of the crime charged, when the other elements are stated in other instructions. *Higbee v. State* 331
7. It is not error to refuse instructions on self-defense, where the court has properly submitted that question to the jury. *Connolly v. State*..... 340
8. It is not error to refuse an instruction, where the evidence does not make it applicable. *Connolly v. State*..... 340
9. It is the duty of the trial judge to instruct on all issues, whether requested to do so or not; and if he omit to instruct on certain points it is erroneous. *Young v. State*... 346
10. In a trial for murder, *held* that an instruction that the law does not require the defendant to flee from his assailant was properly refused. *Turley v. State*..... 471
11. An instruction in a trial for murder that, when competent evidence is introduced tending to prove that defendant acted in self-defense, it is incumbent upon the state to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that he did not so act, *held* proper. *Turley v. State*..... 471
12. On a trial for murder, instructions on self-defense, when considered together, sustained. *Turley v. State*..... 471
13. In a trial for murder, where there is evidence of self-defense, under all the instructions, *held* that no reversible error in instructing on that question appears. *Turley v. State* 471

Criminal Law—Concluded.

14. Alleged improper statements of counsel in argument will not be reviewed unless objected to and ruled on, and the statements, objections, and ruling be preserved in the bill of exceptions. *Connolly v. State*..... 340

Deeds. See COVENANTS.

1. If a grantor of quitclaim obtains an instrument that fortifies the interest which his deed was intended to convey, such instrument inures to the benefit of his grantee. *Ford v. Azelson* 92
2. The construction of an ambiguous deed is ascertained from its language and from the circumstances of the transaction. *Hart v. Saunders*..... 818

Depositions.

- Depositions taken after alienation of land pending suit, and before the alienee becomes a party, may be used against the alienee. *Morris v. Linton*..... 411

Dismissal and Nonsuit. See COSTS. ESTOPPEL, 1. JUDGMENT, 3.

Divorce. See HUSBAND AND WIFE, 2, 3.

1. Under sec. 6, ch. 25, Comp. St., the district court of any county in the state where the parties, or one of them, reside has jurisdiction of a suit for divorce. *Eager v. Eager*..... 827
2. In a suit for divorce under sec. 6, ch. 25, Comp. St., where the plaintiff resides and sues in one county and the defendant resides in another, summons may issue to the county where the defendant resides. *Eager v. Eager*..... 827
3. By secs. 902 and 903 of the code, suits for a divorce are taken out of the general provisions of the code. *Eager v. Eager* 827

Domicile. See HOMECIDE, 1.

Drains.

1. When one files a claim for damages caused by the location of a drainage ditch, he thereby waives objection to irregularities in the proceedings to establish the same. *Gutschow v. Washington County*..... 794
2. Where an assessment equal to benefits has been levied for a drainage ditch, the value of such benefits should not be deducted from damages to land not taken. *Gutschow v. Washington County*..... 794
3. Where benefits received from a drainage ditch exceed the cost apportioned, the benefits in excess of the cost may be set off against consequential damages. *Gutschow v. Washington County*..... 800

Elections. See CONSTITUTIONAL LAW, 7-9. STATUTES, 2, 3.

1. Secs. 4, 10, 15, 20, 21, art. VI, and secs. 13, 20, art. XVIII of the constitution, *held* to fix the terms of office, the time of the beginning and termination of such terms, the time of the first election of judges and regents of the university, and to provide that thereafter, at the general election next preceding the termination of each term of office, a successor be elected, and for a regular succession in such terms of office, and to make it mandatory that a general election be held in each of the odd numbered years. *State v. Galusha*.. 188
2. Under sec. 13, art. XVI of the constitution, *held*, whether annual elections are required depends upon the offices created by the fundamental law, and the time as therein provided at which an election must be held to fill such offices. *State v. Galusha*..... 188
3. Where by the fundamental law certain offices are created, the terms thereof prescribed, and also the time for the election of successors, the legislature is without authority to postpone the election of such successors until the general election held in the next year, and to extend the term of office of the incumbents during the intervening time, and to provide for an election in a different year in which to elect such successors, and a different time for the beginning of such terms of office. *State v. Galusha*..... 188
4. The provisions of the primary act (ch. 66, laws 1905), limiting the right of parties to participate in a primary election to those casting at least one per cent of the total vote cast at the last election, is a reasonable classification of parties and constitutional. *State v. Drexel*..... 776
5. The provisions of ch. 66, laws 1905, making the right of an elector to participate in a primary election to depend upon his party affiliation, are constitutional. *State v. Drexel*.... 776
6. The provision of ch. 66, laws 1905, requiring candidates for election to pay a filing fee, *held* to be in conflict with sec. 23, art. I of the constitution. *State v. Drexel*..... 776

Embezzlement.

1. Evidence in a prosecution for embezzlement of a "right in action" under sec. 121 of the criminal code, *held* to establish the crime. *Higbee v. State*..... 331
2. An allegation in an information for embezzlement that the party injured is a corporation is sustained by proof that it is a *de facto* corporation. *Higbee v. State*..... 331
3. In a prosecution for embezzlement the venue is properly laid in the county where the purpose is formed to convert

Embezzlement—Concluded.

- the right of action, and the decisive steps taken to carry out that purpose. *Higbee v. State*..... 331
4. In embezzlement of a right of action, evidence that the party against whom the right of action existed paid the money involved is sufficient *prima facie* evidence of value. *Higbee v. State*..... 331
5. An instruction which recites some of the elements of embezzlement, and states that the things recited constitute the crime, is erroneous, though another instruction contradicts it and states the other things necessary to constitute guilt. *Higbee v. State*..... 331
6. In a prosecution against an agent for embezzling the rights in action of his employer, an instruction held erroneous which did not include felonious intent. *Higbee v. State*.... 331

Equity. See JUDGMENT, 9-11.

1. The maxim, "Prior in time, prior in right," applies in a contest between rival claimants under equitable titles to real estate. *Johnson v. Hayward*..... 157
2. That a creditor has resorted to expensive and vexatious means to collect a debt affords no ground for denying him equitable relief. *Anthes v. Schroeder*..... 172

Estoppel. See COUNTIES AND COUNTY OFFICERS, 4.

1. The voluntary dismissal of an action before final submission does not operate as an estoppel to a future action. *Yates v. Jones Nat. Bank*..... 734
2. If an assignor of a chattel mortgage given to secure a note past due at the time of the assignment was estopped from enforcing it against a subsequent mortgagee for value, his assignee is also estopped. *May v. First Nat. Bank*..... 251
3. Where one by his conduct induces another to act on the supposition that certain conditions exist, he is estopped to deny the existence of such conditions. *Anthes v. Schroeder*, 172
4. Where one by words or conduct causes another to believe in the existence of a certain state of things, and to alter his position, the former is concluded from averring a different state of things. *Larson v. Anderson*..... 361
5. Where a party gives a reason for his decision and conduct touching a controversy, he is estopped, after litigation has begun, from changing his ground and putting his conduct on a different consideration. *First State Bank v. Stephens Bros.* 616

Evidence. See APPEAL AND ERROR, 3-5, 7. BANKRUPTCY, 6. CARRIERS, 1. CRIMINAL LAW, 1-5. EMBEZZLEMENT, 1, 2. MALICIOUS PROSECUTION, 2. MORTGAGES, 4. MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS, 12. QUIETING TITLE. RAILROADS, 6-9. RAPE, 4. REPLEVIN. TAXATION, 13. TRUSTS, 3.

1. Courts do not take judicial notice of judgments or decrees in cases other than the then pending case. *Allison v. Fidelity Mut. Fire Ins. Co.*..... 366
2. The public seal of another state affixed to a copy of a written law of that state is admissible as evidence of such law. *Rieck v. Griffin*..... 102
3. The unwritten law of another state may be proved by parol evidence. *Rieck v. Griffin*..... 102
4. Parol evidence is inadmissible to vary the terms of a written contract of sale. *Apking v. Hoefer*..... 325
5. The admission of oral evidence to explain possession of and to prove that delivery of a written contract was conditional, held not a violation of the rule which prohibits oral evidence to contradict or vary a written contract. *Dodd v. Kemnitz* 634
6. Possession of a contract is presumptive evidence of delivery, but the presumption may be rebutted. *Dodd v. Kemnitz*... 634
7. Market reports in journals, such as the commercial world relies on, are competent evidence of the state of the market. *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Todd*..... 712
8. A declaration to be part of the *res gestæ* need not necessarily be coincident in point of time with the main fact proved. *City of Lexington v. Fleharty*..... 626
9. The burden of proof of negligence does not shift, but rests upon the party alleging it. *Lincoln Traction Co. v. Shepherd* 374
10. An admission by a deceased person that an account in a certain book is correct will not warrant the admission in evidence of a copy of this account. *Fitch v. Martin*..... 538
11. A judicial record of a sister state must be authenticated by a certificate of the presiding judge. *Chapman v. Chapman* 388
12. Evidence held to show a conveyance fraudulent. *Ainsworth v. Roudal*..... 723
13. Evidence in a creditor's suit, held to support the judgment. *Shreck v. Hanlon*..... 264
14. Evidence held to justify the trial court in vacating a decree. *Arnout v. Chadwick*..... 620
15. Evidence in an action for damages, held to sustain the judgment. *Spencer v. Wilson*..... 459

Evidence—Concluded.

16. Evidence in an action for injuries on a railroad, *held* to support a verdict in plaintiff's favor. *Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co. v. Kerr*..... 1
17. Evidence in an action for personal injuries, *held* not to sustain the judgment. *Lincoln G. & E. L. Co. v. Thomas*..... 257
18. Evidence in an action for personal injuries, *held* to present a question for the jury. *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Harley*.. 462
19. Evidence in a personal injury case against a city, *held* to justify the submission of the case to the jury. *City of Lexington v. Fleharty*..... 626
20. Evidence in a foreclosure suit, *held* insufficient. *Winston v. Armstrong*..... 604
21. Evidence *held* to sustain finding of partnership. *McKibbin v. Day*..... 424
22. Evidence in a suit to quiet title, *held* to uphold the judgment. *Webber v. Ingersoll*..... 393
23. Evidence in suit to establish a trust, *held* sufficient. *Johnson v. Hayward*..... 157

Exceptions, Bill of.

Unless a bill of exceptions is authenticated as required by law, the supreme court cannot consider it. *Miles v. State*..... 684

Executors and Administrators. See ATTORNEY AND CLIENT, 1. MANDAMUS, 4. WITNESSES, 2.

1. An administrator is not entitled to possession of property as against the equitable owner, in the absence of proof that creditors of the estate have superior equitable claims. *Koslowski v. Newman*..... 704
2. The limitation in sec. 117, ch. 23, Comp. St., applies to irregular administrative sales, but not to sales that are absolutely void. *Brandon v. Jensen*..... 569
3. A homestead of less value than \$2,000 cannot be disposed of at administrator's sale, and a license granted by the district court purporting to authorize such a sale is void. *Brandon v. Jensen*..... 569

Fees. See CLERKS OF COURTS. PENALTIES. WITNESSES, 4.

Forcible Entry and Detainer.

Where the right to bring an action of forcible entry and detainer is barred against a grantor, it is against his grantee. *Weatherford v. Union P. R. Co*..... 229

Forgery. See CRIMINAL LAW, 1, 2.

Fraudulent Conveyances. See CREDITORS' SUIT, 3, 4. EVIDENCE, 12, 13.

Garnishment. See JUDGMENT, 4.

Highways.

To establish a highway by prescription there must be continuous user by the public, under a claim of right distinctly manifest by some appropriate act on the part of the public authorities, for a period equal to that required to bar recovery of title to land. *Kansas City & O. R. Co. v. State*..... 868

Homestead. See EXECUTORS AND ADMINISTRATORS, 3.

1. One who purchases land with the intention of making it his home may impress it with a homestead character if he occupies it with his family within a reasonable time after the purchase. *Hair v. Davenport*..... 117
2. A person cannot at the same time have two homesteads. *Hair v. Davenport*..... 117
3. One cannot acquire a second homestead until the first has been abandoned or conveyed, or contracted to be conveyed. *Hair v. Davenport*..... 117
4. A homestead is constituted by the two acts of selection and residence. *Palmer v. Sawyer*..... 108
5. A debtor does not lose his homestead exemption though, by reason of death and the removal of his family, he has no one living with him. *Palmer v. Sawyer*..... 108

Homicide.

1. A box stall at a fair ground used by a man as his office and sleeping apartment, he having no other place of abode, and which contains his clothing and all of his belongings, is in legal effect his domicile. *Young v. State*..... 346
2. Where one charged with murder admits the killing, pleads self-defense, and introduces evidence to establish his defense, he is entitled to an instruction on that issue. *Young v. State*..... 346
3. Where one is assailed in his home, he may use such means as are necessary to repel the assailant, even to the taking of life, but the slayer must believe, and have ground to believe, that the killing is necessary to repel the assailant. *Young v. State*..... 346
4. On a trial for murder, and a plea of self-defense, it is competent to show that deceased was at the time in the lawful possession of the premises where the homicide occurred. *Turley v. State*..... 471

Husband and Wife. See ADVERSE POSSESSION. COVENANTS. INTOXICATING LIQUORS, 1-3. WITNESSES, 1.

1. A contract between husband and wife, made after severance of the marital relation, providing for a division of

Husband and Wife—Concluded.

- property, will be upheld, where no fraud or imposition appears. *Hiett v. Hiatt*..... 96
- 2. In a suit for maintenance after separation, the spouse first repudiating marital obligations must establish freedom from fault. *Chapman v. Chapman*..... 388
- 3. In an action by a wife for maintenance, it is error to render a judgment in her favor for a sum in gross. *Chapman v. Chapman*..... 388

Indictment and Information. See RAPE, 2, 3, 6.

- 1. A criminal information must charge explicitly all that is essential to constitute the offense sought to be described. *Hase v. State*..... 493
- 2. It is not necessary to charge an offense in the exact language of the statute, provided the words employed are equivalent in meaning to those contained therein. *Hase v. State*..... 493
- 3. Where words appear in an information which might be stricken out, leaving an offense sufficiently charged, and such words do not tend to negative any of the essential averments therein, they may be treated as surplusage. *Hase v. State*..... 493
- 4. Information held sufficient to charge the crime of assault with intent to commit murder. *Hase v. State*..... 493
- 5. When two counts of an information involve the same facts, and call for the same evidence to support them, the court will not ordinarily require an election. *Higbee v. State*... 331

Inheritance Tax. See TAXATION, 1-3.

Injunction. See WASTE.

- 1. One is not punishable for contempt for disregarding a void order of injunction; but an injunction granted, where the court has jurisdiction, must be obeyed. *Miles v. State*, 684
- 2. Where one knowingly disobeys an injunction which is not void, he is liable for contempt. *Miles v. State*..... 684
- 3. Where the evidence on a trial for contempt for violation of an injunction is not preserved by a proper bill of exceptions, the only question is whether the pleadings support the judgment. *Miles v. State*..... 684
- 4. A court of equity will interfere by injunction to restrain repeated acts of trespass, though defendants are solvent. *Hornung v. Herring*..... 637
- 5. One in the lawful possession of real estate may restrain repeated acts of trespass until the title can be determined. *Heaton v. Wireman*..... 817

Instructions. See APPEAL AND ERROR, 6-11, BANKRUPTCY, 7. COUNTIES AND COUNTY OFFICERS, 6. CRIMINAL LAW, 6-13. EMBEZZLEMENT, 5, 6. HOMICIDE, 2. LANDLORD AND TENANT, 4. MALICIOUS PROSECUTION, 3. MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS, 15. TRIAL, 2.

Insurance.

1. The state auditor is clothed with a broad discretion in determining whether a fraternal beneficial society is entitled to a license to do business, but it is a legal discretion. *State v. Searle*..... 486
2. The mortuary fund of a fraternal beneficial society should be kept separate from the other funds of such society, and the state auditor may require this to be done before granting license to continue business. *State v. Searle*..... 486
3. Under the petition, *held* that the state auditor should have called attention of a beneficial society to irregularities before refusing it a license. *State v. Searle*..... 486
4. A certificate of a beneficial association is a contract of insurance between the member and the association. *Soehner v. Grand Lodge, O. S. H.*..... 399
5. Where under the laws of a beneficial society it is the duty of members to pay dues to the secretary of the local lodge, the secretary receiving such dues is the agent of the grand lodge. *Soehner v. Grand Lodge, O. S. H.*..... 399
6. Conditions in a policy of insurance limiting or avoiding liability are strictly construed against the insurer. *Soehner v. Grand Lodge, O. S. H.*..... 399
7. In an action on an insurance certificate, *held* error to direct a verdict for defendant. *Soehner v. Grand Lodge, O. S. H.*.. 399
8. An untrue representation in an application for insurance will not vitiate the policy unless it is of such a nature that it might have been an inducement to issue the policy. *Bankers Union of the World v. Mison*..... 26
9. Where a certificate of membership in a railway relief department expressly provides that the indemnity therein provided shall be waived or forfeited by an action for damages against the railway company, the terms of the contract determine the consequences of an election. *Walters v. Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co.*..... 551
10. Where notice of an injury is received and acted on by an accident insurance company, the relationship between the sender of the notice and either the assured or the beneficiary is immaterial. *Continental Casualty Co. v. Buchtel*.. 823
11. It is competent for the insured to waive all claim under the policy in case of death resulting from smallpox, and to

Insurance—Concluded.

- make such waiver binding on the beneficiary. *Bankers Union of the World v. Nixon*..... 36
12. If, with knowledge of facts permitting a forfeiture, the insurer treats the policy as in force, the forfeiture is waived. *Soehner v. Grand Lodge, O. S. H.*..... 399
13. Where an insurance policy provides for filing final proof of loss on blanks furnished by the company within 30 days of the injury, and the company, with knowledge of the injury, neglects to furnish such blanks within the time, it is a waiver of the condition. *Continental Casualty Co. v. Buchtel* 823

Intoxicating Liquors. See APPEAL AND ERROR, 15. PLEADING, 5.

1. One selling intoxicating liquor is liable, not only for the actual results of the sale, but for all damages from disqualification resulting from or contributed to by such sale, without reference to length of time of the disqualification. *Jessen v. Willhite*..... 608
2. Where a husband becomes an habitual drunkard, and abandons and ceases to support his family, whether such loss of support is permanent is a question for the jury. *Jessen v. Willhite*..... 608
3. In an action by a wife to recover in behalf of herself and children damages from the sale of liquor to her husband, the defendant cannot show in mitigation of damages that the wife has commenced proceedings for divorce. *Jessen v. Willhite*..... 608
4. The act of 1895 (laws 1895, ch. 22) is ineffectual as an amendment or repeal of sec. 6, ch. 50, Comp. St., which requires an applicant for liquor license to give bond in the sum of \$5,000, with at least two sureties, freeholders of the county. *Lee v. Brittain*..... 591
5. A transcript of the evidence is not essential to give the district court jurisdiction of an appeal from an order granting a liquor license; a transcript of the proceedings containing such order being sufficient. *State v. McGuire*... 769
6. Where the district court has acquired jurisdiction of an appeal from a license board, and the board fails to transmit the evidence taken at the hearing, the district court may enter a rule requiring the board to supply the omission. *State v. McGuire*..... 769

Irrigation. See WATERS, 3.

Judgment.

1. The district court may enter a judgment *nunc pro tunc* on motion and notice. *Phelps v. Wolff*..... 44

Judgment—Concluded.

2. An entry which has been held by the supreme court insufficient to constitute a final judgment is not a bar to an application for the entry of a judgment *nunc pro tunc*. *Phelps v. Wolff*..... 44
3. A judgment *nunc pro tunc* must be no broader than the judgment actually rendered. *Phelps v. Wolff*..... 44
4. A judgment in garnishment in one state is a bar to an action by the principal defendant against the garnishee in the state of the residence of the former. *Hadacheck v. Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co.*..... 385
5. The rule that the plea of *res judicata* applies to every point which properly belonged to the subject matter of litigation yields in cases where a valid excuse for failure to allege facts and seek relief in the former action is shown. *First Nat. Bank v. Gibson*..... 232
6. A cause of action once determined on the merits cannot be relitigated. *Yates v. Jones Nat. Bank*..... 734
7. Judgments on demurrer which go to the merits of the case are final; but judgments on demurrer based on a technical defect of pleading, or lack of jurisdiction, will not support the plea of *res judicata*. *Yates v. Jones Nat. Bank*..... 734
8. The dismissal of a bill without prejudice does not conclude the parties thereto. *Morris v. Linton*..... 411
9. Actual fraud is not necessary to justify a trial court in setting aside a decree rendered at a former term on the ground of fraud. *Arnout v. Chadwick*..... 620
10. A court of equity will not relieve against a judgment obtained against a party by reason of negligence of his attorney. *Tootle-Weakley M. Co. v. Billingsley*..... 531
11. In a suit to set aside a decree affecting title to real estate, plaintiff cannot recover unless he has some interest in the property. *Stull v. Masilonka*..... 309
12. Delay in recording a judgment will not invalidate it in the absence of fraud. *Galloway v. Rochester L. & B. Co.*..... 695
13. An officer's return to a summons, showing service by leaving at the "last" usual place of residence, held not to support a judgment based thereon. *Ruby v. Pierce*..... 754
14. A judgment overruling a motion for restitution in mandamus on the ground that respondent was not entitled to restitution, and that his remedy was in an action at law, will be adhered to. *Horton v. Hayden*..... 339

Jurisdiction. See **DIVORCE.**

Jury.

The objection that a juror is disqualified because of having been convicted of a felony may be waived. *Turley v. State*, 471

Justice of the Peace.

To confer jurisdiction on a district court on appeal from a judgment of a justice, the justice's docket must show that an undertaking was executed and delivered to the justice for record within time. *Oaster v. Scheuneman*..... 243

Landlord and Tenant.

1. Where a tenant holds over his term, the law presumes a continuation of his original tenancy for another like term, but this presumption is not conclusive. *Rosenberg v. Sprecher* 176
2. To sustain an action for the use and occupation of real estate, the relation of landlord and tenant must exist. *Rosenberg v. Sprecher*..... 176
3. Where a tenant holds over his term, the landlord may elect to treat him as a trespasser or as a tenant for a new term, and his election is conclusive against him. *Rosenberg v. Sprecher* 176
4. Instructions in an action for use and occupation, held erroneous. *Rosenberg v. Sprecher*..... 176
5. A tenancy from year to year will be presumed, where a tenant remains in possession after the expiration of his term, and his tenancy is recognized by the landlord. *West v. Lungren*..... 105
6. The presumption that a tenant holding over is a tenant from year to year may be rebutted by proof of a different agreement, or of facts inconsistent with the presumption. *West v. Lungren*..... 105

Larceny.

The crime of larceny defined. *Ladeaux v. State*..... 19

Libel and Slander.

1. The manner in which a public officer conducted the duties of his office is a fair subject for comment by the press when he is a candidate for reelection. *Farley v. McBride*.. 49
2. Where a newspaper states that the sheriff of the county, who is a candidate for reelection, had obtained money on an imaginary account for expenses, if false, it is libelous *per se*. *Farley v. McBride*..... 49

Limitation of Actions. See ADVERSE POSSESSION, 1. EXECUTORS AND ADMINISTRATORS, 2. TAXATION, 16.

1. Where leave of the legislature is necessary to sue the state, the statute of limitations will not begin to run until such leave is given. *Lancaster County v. State*..... 215

Limitation of Actions—Concluded.

2. Actions for relief on the ground of fraud must be brought within four years from the discovery of the fraud or such facts as, if followed up, would lead to its discovery. *Weckerly v. Taylor*..... 84
3. Where an injury to crops and lands is caused by the negligent construction of a railroad embankment, the cause of action accrues at the date of the injury. *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Mitchell*..... 563
4. While an issue is being litigated in the courts, the statute of limitations will not run thereon. *First Nat. Bank v. Gibson* 236
5. An amended petition setting up a new cause of action, barred when the amended petition is filed, is demurrable. *Clifford v. Thun*..... 831
6. An application for a deficiency judgment should be made within five years from confirmation of the foreclosure sale. *Pochin v. Conley*..... 429

Malicious Prosecution.

1. In an action for malicious prosecution, where two complaints were filed, *hald* error to exclude testimony that a full disclosure was made to the prosecuting attorney before the filing of the second complaint, which was the one on which the plaintiff was bound over. *Schroeder v. Blum*... 60
2. In an action for malicious prosecution, where the prosecuting witness testifies to an overt criminal act within his own knowledge, which is denied, corroborative evidence that the act was committed is relevant and material. *Schroeder v. Blum*..... 60
3. In an action for malicious prosecution, an instruction that facts cannot be considered which existed prior to the criminal proceedings, not communicated to the party instituting the prosecution, is erroneous. *Schroeder v. Blum*..... 60

Mandamus. See SCHOOLS AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

1. Mandamus will be denied, unless it appear that a substantial right is in jeopardy for want of a plain, adequate remedy in law. *State v. McGuire*..... 769
2. To compel a license board to reduce to writing testimony taken on the hearing of an application for a liquor license, one must show, not only a right to have the evidence reviewed, but that he intends to have it reviewed. *State v. McGuire* 769
3. Invalid provisions of an act, not operating to avoid the whole, will not excuse performance of a duty enjoined by the valid portions of the act. *State v. Malone*..... 645

Mandamus—Concluded.

4. It is not abuse of discretion to deny mandamus, where its object is to compel the transfer of a trust fund from a county judge whose bond is sufficient to an administrator whose bond is insufficient. *State v. Hendee*..... 847

Master and Servant. See CONTRACTS, 7. EVIDENCE, 17.

1. In an action for personal injuries, where the plaintiff is charged with contributory negligence, evidence of an unfounded belief on his part as to a condition which caused the injuries is immaterial, where due regard for his own safety required him to know the truth. *Hubler v. Johnson-McLean Co.*..... 840
2. In an action for personal injuries, motion to direct a verdict for defendant, *held* properly sustained. *Hubler v. Johnson-McLean Co.*..... 840
3. The master is liable for the acts of his servant within the general scope of his employment. *Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co. v. Kerr*..... 1

Mortgages. See EVIDENCE, 20. LIMITATION OF ACTIONS, 6.

1. Plaintiff in a foreclosure suit *held* not guilty of laches. *Phelps v. Wolff*..... 44
2. A mortgage securing a *bona fide* indebtedness *held* valid, though the note be invalid for want of a revenue stamp. *Morris v. Linton*..... 411
3. The rule requiring evidence to support the allegation, in a petition to foreclose a mortgage, that no proceedings at law have been had, is available to an attaching creditor resisting the foreclosure and plaintiff's claim of priority. *Fryer v. Fryer*..... 845
4. Under the evidence, *held*, that the district court had acquired jurisdiction in foreclosure proceedings, and that the decree and sale were not void. *Stull v. Mastlonka*..... 309
5. Where a valid mortgage has been foreclosed, though the foreclosure proceedings were void, neither the mortgagor nor one claiming under him can assail the title acquired without offering to pay the decree. *Stull v. Mastlonka*..... 309

Municipal Corporations. See CONSTITUTIONAL LAW, 7, 8. MANDAMUS, 3.

1. Sec. 101b, ch. 12a, Comp. St., authorizes a special assessment on such real estate as may be "specifically" benefited by a park or boulevard to pay for land appropriated or purchased for such improvement. *Hart v. City of Omaha*..... 836
2. Sec. 101b, ch. 12a, Comp. St., providing for assessments for parks and boulevards, is not controlled by nor in conflict

Municipal Corporations—Continued.

- with sec. 158, which provides for assessment of damages for the appropriation of private property for street purposes. *Hart v. City of Omaha*..... 836
3. Sec. 101b, ch. 12a, Comp. St., does not require the issuance of bonds under all circumstances where lands are appropriated for the construction of parks or boulevards, but only where the special assessment is insufficient. *Hart v. City of Omaha*..... 836
4. Ordinarily, whether a particular lot or tract of land is specially benefited by a boulevard is a question of fact, and that real estate is three-quarters of a mile from a boulevard will not authorize the court to say as a matter of law that it is not specially benefited. *Hart v. City of Omaha*... 836
5. A call for a special session of a city council, "for the purpose of considering communications, petitions, resolutions, committee reports, and ordinances on first, second and third reading and passage," where such call is recorded, is sufficient to enable the council to introduce, read and pass ordinances at such special meeting. *Richardson v. City of Omaha* 297
6. A resolution of the city council of Omaha, directing that certain permanent sidewalks shall be constructed "of stone or artificial stone," held a compliance with an ordinance requiring a designation of the kind of material with which permanent sidewalks shall be constructed. *Richardson v. City of Omaha*..... 297
7. A contract of a city in violation of a mandatory provision of its charter is void. *City of Plattsmouth v. Murphy*..... 749
8. A city is not required to search for defects in streets and sidewalks, where there is no reason to suppose defects exist. *City of Omaha v. Kochem*..... 718
9. A city is not charged with implied notice of a latent defect in a sidewalk by the existence of a defect therein of a different character. *City of Omaha v. Kochem*..... 718
10. A city must keep its sidewalks in reasonably safe condition, but is not charged with implied notice of a latent defect in a sidewalk, not apparent on ordinary inspection. *City of Omaha v. Kochem*..... 718
11. Contributory negligence is not imputable to one as a matter of law from the mere fact that he attempts to pass over a walk that is obstructed. *City of Beatrice v. Forbes*..... 125
12. Evidence as to the condition of a sidewalk, in an action for damages, held sufficient to justify the submission of the case to the jury. *City of Omaha v. Lewis*..... 184

Municipal Corporations—Concluded.

13. In an action for damages for injuries against a city, where the evidence is such that reasonable men might fairly differ as to the plaintiff's negligence causing the injury, the case should go to the jury. *City of Beatrice v. Forbes*..... 125
14. In an action for negligence against an electric light company, *held*, that the direction of a verdict for defendant was proper. *Powell v. New Omaha T-H. E. L. Co.*..... 280
15. Instructions in a personal injury case against a city, *held* to state the law. *City of Lexington v. Fleharty*..... 626

New Trial. See CRIMINAL LAW, 4.

Affidavits in support of motion for new trial on the ground of newly discovered evidence, which fail to state facts showing diligence, are insufficient. *Jessen v. Willhite*..... 608

Notice. See CORPORATIONS, 1. TAXATION, 17.

Officers. See PENALTIES.

1. Ordinarily, the words "term" or "term of office," when used in reference to the tenure of office, mean a fixed and definite period of time. *State v. Galusha*..... 188
2. Sec. 20, art. VI of the constitution, *held* not to mean that the legal terms of office of the officers provided for in the article shall consist of the fixed periods therein mentioned, and in addition the indeterminate period which an incumbent may hold after the expiration of his fixed term, and until a successor shall be qualified. *State v. Galusha*..... 188
3. The legislature cannot appoint county officers, nor by an act solely for that purpose extend the terms of such officers. *State v. Plasters*..... 652

Partition.

Where proceedings in partition are amicable, it is proper to allow an attorney's fee to be paid by the parties in proportion to their interest. *Johnson v. Emerick*..... 303

Partnership. See EVIDENCE, 21.

Party Walls.

One who consents to the uncovering of a portion of a roof to allow a party wall to be built higher cannot recover damages from leakage, unless he proves that the injury resulted from the negligence of the defendant. *Ruff v. Garvey* 522

Payment.

In the absence of evidence, an agent for collection who cancels the obligation of the debtor is presumed to have done so in consideration of the face amount of the claim. *Lexington Bank v. Phenix Ins. Co.*..... 548

Penalties.

1. The statute allowing a public officer 25 cents for each certificate and seal does not contemplate that he must formulate a statement of facts to which he certifies. *Shetbley v. Hurley* 31
2. The clerk of the district court cannot be required to search the records of his office to ascertain what liens, if any, exist against lands described in an abstract of title, and enter upon the abstract the result of such search. *Shetbley v. Hurley* 31
3. In an action against a public officer to recover a penalty, under sec. 34, ch. 28, Comp. St., if the fee received was for services he was not required to render, together with other services for which it would have been illegal to exact a fee, it will not be presumed that the fee exacted was more than the service for which he was entitled to compensation was reasonably worth. *Shetbley v. Hurley* 31

Physicians and Surgeons. See CORPORATIONS, 4, 5.

1. A corporation is not such a person as can be licensed to practice medicine under ch. 55, Comp. St. *State Electro-Medical Inst. v. State* 40
2. Under ch. 55, Comp. St., one who undertakes to judge the nature of disease or to determine the remedy therefor must have the personal qualifications prescribed therein. *State Electro-Medical Inst. v. State* 40

Pleading. See BONDS. LIMITATION OF ACTIONS, 5. RAILROADS, 4, 5. STATES, 3.

1. Where want of jurisdiction does not appear on the face of the record, it may be pleaded in the answer. *Templin v. Kimsey* 614
2. That defendant first raised the question of jurisdiction on a special appearance, which was overruled, does not affect his right to include a plea to jurisdiction in his answer. *Templin v. Kimsey* 614
3. An assignment of a chose in action, even without consideration, is not presumptively fraudulent as to a creditor who becomes such nearly four years afterwards. Circumstances must be pleaded from which fraud may be inferred. *Weckerly v. Taylor* 84
4. In an action to recover money paid on a judgment in manumission which was reversed, a petition which alleges payment of the money and reversal of the judgment, without alleging that plaintiff is entitled to the money, does not state a cause of action. *Horton v. Hayden* 339
5. A petition against a surety upon a liquor license bond that

INDEX.

Pleading—Concluded.

- does not allege the granting of a license does not state a cause of action. *Quist v. American B. & T. Co.*..... 692
6. A petition which alleges that a contract of a corporation was made, executed and delivered by it by its officer and agent is not demurrable on the ground that authority by the agent does not appear. *Johnson County v. Chamberlain Banking House*..... 549
7. Where from the answer and the evidence it appears that both parties have placed the same construction on a petition, the supreme court will not ignore such construction in ruling on its sufficiency. *Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co. v. Kerr*, 1
8. A defective or ambiguous petition may be aided by averments in the answer. *Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co. v. Kerr*... 1
9. Where a petition is first assailed in the supreme court, its allegations will receive a liberal construction. *Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co. v. Kerr*..... 1
10. An admission of a conclusion of law may be avoided by averments in the same pleading which show the admission to be erroneous. *Hensel v. Hoffman*..... 382
11. If defendant admits that he entered into a contract with plaintiffs by an associate name, he concedes that plaintiffs have capacity to enforce the same in the contract name. *Miller v. Loverene & Browne Co.*..... 557
12. Petition in district court held not a departure from the issues in the county court. *Rieck v. Griffn*..... 102
13. A denial in an answer in an action on contract, together with a statement that a different contract was made, is not a change of issue from a general denial. *McGinnis v. Johnson Co.*..... 356
14. An answer setting up the statute of limitations is not a technical plea of confession and avoidance. *Webber v. Ingersoll* 393

Pledges.

Where an agent pledges machinery to one advancing money to pay freight thereon, the pledgee has a lien on the property. *Robinson & Co. v. Ralph*..... 55

Principal and Agent. See TRUSTS, 1.

One occupying confidential relations toward another will not be permitted to make use of knowledge or opportunities to his own advantage and the injury of the party with whom he is dealing. *Morrison v. Hunter*..... 559

Process. See JUDGMENT, 13.

1. Under sec. 65 of the code, where an action is rightly brought in any county, a summons may be issued to any other

Process—Concluded.

- county against nonresidents who may be found therein.
Adair County Bank v. Forrey..... 811
2. Where an action is rightly brought in any county, a non-resident who may be found in another county is liable to service therein as a resident, and the court thereby acquires jurisdiction. *Adair County Bank v. Forrey*..... 811
3. Where one makes a special appearance, objecting to jurisdiction because of irregularities in the service of process, he must point out the defects upon which he relies. *Smith v. Delane*..... 594
4. The statutory provisions for service other than personal service are construed strictly and all steps required to be taken must be followed with substantial accuracy. *Stull v. Masilonka*..... 322

Property.

- The law of the situs governs immovable property. *Morris v. Linton* 411

Quieting Title. See EVIDENCE, 22.

- Evidence in a suit to quiet title *held* to sustain the decree.
Coppom v. Forman..... 275

Railroads. See CARRIERS, 3, 4. TRIAL, 3.

1. Railway companies are vested with a broad discretion in locating and discontinuing freight and passenger stations, and courts will not interfere except in cases of its abuse. *Chicago & N. W. R. Co. v. State*..... 77
2. It is not an abuse of discretion for a railway company to discontinue the employment of an agent at a country place five to seven miles from three villages where regular service is maintained. *Chicago & N. W. R. Co. v. State*..... 77
3. A railroad company is not required to fence its right of way across a public highway, whether it is established by legal authority or by adverse user for the statutory time. *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Dowhower*..... 600
4. Petition in an action for injuries on a railroad, *held* to state a cause of action and to support the judgment. *Chicago, R. I. & P. R. Co. v. Kerr*..... 1
5. Petition in an action for damages against a railroad company for negligently constructing embankments, causing overflow, *held* to state a cause of action. *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Mitchell*..... 563
6. Evidence in an action for damages against a railroad company causing damage from overflow, *held* to support judgment. *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Mitchell*..... 563

INDEX.

Railroads—Concluded.

7. Evidence in an action to recover damages for injuries resulting from fire alleged to have been caused by a railroad company, *held* to support the verdict. *Union P. R. Co. v. Fickenschcr* 497
8. Evidence in an action for damages for injury to live stock, *held* not to show negligence in the operation of a train. *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Dowhower*..... 600
9. In an action for damages by fire, plaintiff must identify the fire which caused the damage with the fire originated by defendant. *Union P. R. Co. v. Fickenschcr*..... 507

Rape.

1. Secs. 11 and 12 of the criminal code describe three classes of crimes, each of which is totally distinct from the other two. *Hubert v. State*..... 220
2. An information for the crime of rape under the first clause of sec. 12 of the criminal code must charge that the act was done with force and against the will or consent of the prosecutrix. *Hubert v. State*..... 220
3. An information for the crime of rape under the second clause of sec. 12 of the criminal code must charge the person upon whom the offense was committed as being a female child under 18 years of age, and the accused as being a male person of the age of 18 years or over; and, in case the prosecutrix is over 15 years of age, her previous chastity must be alleged. *Hubert v. State*..... 220
4. On a trial for rape, the state should not be permitted to introduce evidence of acts and alleged statements of the accused which do not tend to corroborate the evidence of the prosecutrix, or impeach or discredit his own testimony. *Hubert v. State*..... 220
5. Sec. 12 of the criminal code, as amended, defines but one crime and prescribes the punishment therefor. *Hubert v. State* 226
6. If a man 18 years of age or upwards is guilty of the sexual act with a female child not over the age of 15 years, or under 18 years and not previously unchaste, the law will presume that the act was done forcibly and against her will. *Hubert v. State*..... 226

Real Estate Agents.

1. Services as a real estate broker, without a written contract, cannot be recovered for on a *quantum meruit*. *Rodenbrock v. Gress*..... 409
2. The contract of a broker to find a purchaser for land at a price satisfactory to the seller is performed when buyer and seller are brought together. *Johnson v. Hayward*..... 166

Replevin. See SALES, 4.

In replevin verdict and judgment *held* supported by the evidence. *May v. First Nat. Bank*..... 251

Riparian Rights. See WATERS, 4-7.

Sales. See EVIDENCE, 4.

1. Generally, when the terms of sale of personal property have been agreed on and everything the seller has to do is complete, the sale becomes absolute without payment or delivery, and title vests in the buyer. *Baker v. McDonald*..... 595
2. Where time of payment is not fixed by a contract of sale, the law presumes a cash sale, and the buyer is not entitled to possession until the price is paid or tendered. *Baker v. McDonald* 595
3. Where the amount to be paid for hay is to be determined by measurement, a measurement resulting from fraud or mistake is not binding, and a tender based thereon does not entitle the purchaser to possession. *Baker v. McDonald*.... 595
4. Where there is fraud in a sale, the seller may recover possession of the property by an action in replevin on the ground of special ownership and right of possession, but he cannot maintain such action under claim of absolute ownership without rescinding the contract and tendering the amount paid. *Baker v. McDonald*..... 595
5. One is not a *bona fide* purchaser for value until he has paid the purchase price or become irrevocably bound for its payment. *Nebraska Moline Plow Co. v. Blackburn*..... 246
6. In an action for fraud as to value in the sale of goods, the measure of damages is the difference between the value as represented and the real value. *McKibbin v. Day*..... 424
7. Where goods of a bankrupt were used by defendant, *held*, that there was an implied contract to pay the market value of the goods, which could be enforced by an action on the contract. *Teetzel v. Davidson Bros. Marble Co*..... 529
8. A purchaser who accepts and consumes goods, without objection, admits that they comply in quality with the terms of his purchase. *Cohen v. Hawkins*..... 249
9. Where coal was ordered December 7, 1901, for the winter trade, an offer to deliver March 28, 1902, is such an unreasonable delay as to release the buyer. *McGinnis v. Johnson Co*..... 356
10. Whether an offer to deliver coal was made within a reasonable time is a question of law. *McGinnis v. Johnson Co*.... 356

INDEX.

Schools and School Districts.

1. A foster-parent of a child of school age may by mandamus compel the board of education to admit such child to attendance, without payment of tuition, in the public schools where the foster-parent resides. *McNish v. State*..... 261
2. To be entitled to such relief, it is not necessary that the foster-parent shall have legally adopted the child. *McNish v. State* 261

States. See LIMITATION OF ACTIONS, 1.

1. Where the law makes no provision for the payment of his claim, a creditor of the state is not required to file it within two years after its accrual with the auditor for adjustment. *Lancaster County v. State*..... 211
2. A resolution of the state senate, passed in accordance with sec. 1106 of the code, will authorize a claimant to sue the state. *Lancaster County v. State*..... 211
3. Petition in action against state *held* sufficient to resist a general demurrer. *Lancaster County v. State*..... 211
4. The power to prohibit the use of the national flag may be exercised by the several states. *Haller v. State*..... 757

Statute of Frauds.

- A contract with an agent for the purchase of real estate is not a contract for the creation of an estate or trust in lands within the statute of frauds. *Johnson v. Hayward*..... 157

Statutes. See CONSTITUTIONAL LAW. INTOXICATING LIQUORS, 4. MANDAMUS, 3.

1. A repealing clause in a statute repeals prior statutes to the extent only that they conflict with the act last passed. *State v. Drexel*..... 776
2. The title to ch. 66, laws 1905, regulating primary elections does not embrace legislation concerning the registration of voters for general elections. *State v. Drexel*..... 776
3. The title to ch. 66, laws 1905, is not broad enough to permit legislation concerning the form of ballots to be used at a general election. *State v. Drexel*..... 776
4. Where a statute contains provisions which are unconstitutional, if the valid portion is not dependent upon the part that is void, the latter alone will be disregarded, if the void part was not an inducement to the legislature to pass the valid part. *State v. Drexel*..... 776
5. The invalid provisions of ch. 66, laws 1905, *held* not to affect the remainder of the act. *State v. Drexel*..... 776
6. Ch. 11, laws 1901, amendatory of sec. 19, ch. 10, Comp.

Statutes—Concluded.

St. 1899, relating to official bonds, *held void*. *Knight v. Lancaster County*..... 82

7. In construing a statute, effect, if possible, must be given to every clause and part of the statute. *State v. Fink*..... 641

Street Railways. See CARRIERS, 1, 2.

1. In an action against a street railway company for damages for personal injuries, the burden of proof of negligence does not shift upon proof that the injuries resulted from a derailment of the car. *Omaha Street R. Co. v. Boesen*..... 764
2. The presumption of negligence arising from the derailment of a street car is met by evidence which makes it equally probable that the accident was not due to negligence of the defendant. *Omaha Street R. Co. v. Boesen*..... 764
3. A street railway company is not an insurer of its passengers, and it fulfills its obligations when it exercises the utmost diligence and foresight consistent with the practical conduct of its business. *Omaha Street R. Co. v. Boesen*.... 764
4. To render a street railway company liable for injuries, the negligence of its servants must be the proximate cause of the injuries. *Bevard v. Lincoln Traction Co.*..... 802
5. The wrongful act of a stranger will not make a street railway company liable, unless it might have been foreseen and guarded against. *Bevard v. Lincoln Traction Co.*..... 802

Subrogation.

1. Ordinarily, a junior mortgagee is not entitled to be subrogated to a lien which did not exist when his mortgage was taken. *Anthes v. Schroeder*..... 172
2. Evidence *held* to show that a lien to which plaintiff seeks to be subrogated existed at the time his mortgage was taken. *Anthes v. Schroeder*..... 172
3. Plaintiff *held* not guilty of such laches as to deprive him of his right to subrogation. *Anthes v. Schroeder*..... 172

Taxation. See MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS, 1-4, 6. WASTE.

1. The tax provided for in the inheritance tax law (laws 1901, ch. 54, as amended, laws 1905, ch. 117) is not a property tax, but a tax on the right of succession to property by inheritance or will. *State v. Vinsonhaler*..... 675
2. The enumeration of subjects of taxation in sec. 1, art. IX of the constitution, is not exclusive, and the legislature has power to provide for taxation upon inheritances. *State v. Vinsonhaler* 675
3. Ch. 54, laws 1901, as amended, laws 1905, ch. 117, only requires the tax to be levied on the share that each heir or devisee takes. *State v. Vinsonhaler*..... 675

INDEX.

Taxation—Continued.

4. The abandonment of property used for religious and educational purposes, with the intent never again to use it for such purposes, renders it liable to taxation from the time of such abandonment. *Holthaus v. Adams County*..... 861
5. A county is not liable for state taxes in the hands of a county treasurer, if lost without fault of the county. *Lancaster County v. State*..... 215
6. Ch. 112, laws 1905, amendatory of sec. 121, art. I, ch. 77, Comp. St. 1903, authorizes a county board to correct errors of assessment or of apparent gross injustice in valuation at any of its annual meetings. *State v. Grow*..... 850
7. The several owners of different tracts of land may unite in a petition to the county board of equalization for relief from errors and injustice of assessment. *State v. Grow*..... 850
8. Where the county board of equalization has jurisdiction, its orders are conclusive. *State v. Grow*..... 850
9. The valuation made by an assessor is presumed to be correct, and the burden is upon those attacking it before the board of equalization to show that it should be increased. *Woods v. Lincoln Gas & E. L. Co.*..... 526
10. The findings of a board of equalization must be so manifestly wrong that reasonable minds could not differ thereon before they will be disturbed. *Woods v. Lincoln Gas & E. L. Co.*..... 526
11. The discretion of a board of equalization will not be disturbed unless manifestly wrong. *Field v. Lincoln Traction Co.*..... 418
12. Under sec. 311 of the code, a bill of exceptions of proceedings before a county board of equalization may be settled and approved by its presiding officer, if within the time and on notice to the adverse party, as therein provided. *Field v. Nebraska Tel. Co.*..... 419
13. A tax list made in conformity with statute is *prima facie* evidence that a levy was made by the proper authorities, and is conclusive as against a claim of irregularities in making such levies. *Holthaus v. Adams County*..... 861
14. The provisions of the revenue law of 1903 (laws 1903, ch. 73), changing the method of procedure in the enforcement of the collection of taxes, are available for the collection of taxes delinquent prior to the time such revenue law went into effect. *Holthaus v. Adams County*..... 861
15. Sec. 26, ch. 75, laws 1903, held not to authorize the sale of tax sale certificates owned by the state, or by any county or city, for less than the amount due thereon. *State v. Fink*.. 641

Taxation—Concluded.

16. One seeking to redeem from a foreclosure sale based on a tax lien must bring suit within two years from the date of the tax sale. *Clifford v. Thun*..... 831
17. Notice by publication was directed to "H. A. Wyman, Receiver," Wyman's true name being "Henry A. Wyman." Held, that, as the petition showed that Wyman was appointed receiver by the court of a sister state, he was not a necessary party to a suit to redeem from a sale on foreclosure of a tax lien, and a defect in the notice to him was immaterial. *Clifford v. Thun*..... 831

Trespas. See EVIDENCE, 15. INJUNCTION, 4, 5.

Trial. See APPEAL AND ERROR. CRIMINAL LAW. INSURANCE, 7. MASTER AND SERVANT, 2. MUNICIPAL CORPORATIONS, 12, 13.

1. Error in the admission of evidence may ordinarily be cured by striking it from the record and withdrawing it from the jury by an instruction. *McKibbin v. Day*..... 424
2. Where one produces proof to sustain his theory of the case, he is entitled to have such theory submitted by suitable instructions, without qualifying words calculated to mislead the jury. *Brownfield v. Union P. R. Co.*..... 440
3. Where the proximate cause of an injury depends upon a state of facts from which different minds might draw different inferences, it is a proper question for the jury. *Chicago, B. & Q. R. Co. v. Harley*..... 462
4. If a party desires to complain of the absence of the official reporter, he should call the attention of the trial court thereto, obtain a ruling, and if forced to trial without the reporter, preserve his exceptions. *Tootle-Weakley M. Co. v. Billingsley* 531

Trusts.

1. Where one employed to purchase real estate purchases it for himself, he becomes a trustee for his principal. *Johnson v. Hayward*..... 157
2. Distinction between trusts executed and executory stated. *Morris v. Linton*..... 411
3. Evidence in a suit against an agent for conveyance of land, held to establish confidential relations entitling plaintiff to relief. *Morrison v. Hunter*..... 559

Vendor and Purchaser.

1. Where rent is reserved in a share of the crops, the landlord and tenant are tenants in common of the growing crops, and a purchaser of the real estate during the term of the lease is not entitled to a portion of the crop belong-

INDEX.

Vendor and Purchaser—Concluded.

ing to the landlord which had been severed from the realty.

Wendt v. Stewart..... 855

2. A purchaser with notice from a *bona fide* purchaser without notice is entitled to protection against a claim, invalid as against his grantor. *Ford v. Axelson*..... 92

Venue. See EMBEZZLEMENT, 3.

Verdict. See APPEAL AND ERROR, 24-26.

Waiver. See DRAINS, 1. INSURANCE, 11-13. JURY.

Waste.

1. When taxes on land are past due, the county may restrain waste, where it would reduce the value of the property to an amount insufficient to pay the taxes. *Lancaster County v. Fitzgerald*..... 433
2. Where taxes are past due, to maintain a suit for waste it is not necessary that a county first purchase the property at tax sale. *Lancaster County v. Fitzgerald*..... 433

Waters. See DRAINS.

1. A landowner is not answerable to an adjoining proprietor for causing surface water to flow on the premises of the latter to his damage unless guilty of negligence. *Aldritt v. Fleischauer* 66
2. A landowner may drain ponds which have no natural outlet by discharging the waters thereof into a natural surface-water drain over the land of another, if he does so in a reasonable manner and without negligence. *Aldritt v. Fleischauer* 66
3. While an irrigation district may contract with an engineer to survey and furnish plans for the construction of a proposed canal, such work is preliminary to the work of construction, and the expense is not to be paid out of the construction fund. *Willow Springs Irrig. Dist. v. Wilson*..... 269
4. The title to the bed of a navigable river in Nebraska is in the state, and the rights of a riparian proprietor thereon are bounded by the banks of the river. *Kinkead v. Turgeon*, 573
5. Under the common law, a riparian owner of lands holds to the thread of the stream, subject to the public easement of navigation. *Kinkead v. Turgeon*..... 580
6. The common law relating to the rights of riparian owners is applicable in this state. *Kinkead v. Turgeon*..... 580
7. Where the Missouri river suddenly abandons its former bed, the respective riparian owners are entitled to the soil

Waters—Concluded.

formerly under its waters as far as the thread of the stream, and may maintain ejectment therefor. *Kinkead v. Turgeon* 580

Wills.

A received from B \$5,000, and agreed to pay B annually \$300 during the lifetime of B, the \$5,000 to remain to A upon the death of B and payments as aforesaid. *Held* not an attempt at a testamentary disposition of B's property. *Fiscus v. Wilson* 444

Witnesses.

1. In an action against a married woman, where the proceeding is adversary, her husband is not a competent witness against her. *Weckerly v. Taylor* 772
2. One who has filed a claim against an estate for legal services is not incompetent to testify as to certain independent acts performed when deceased had no personal connection with such acts. *Fitch v. Martin* 538
3. On a subsequent trial, the evidence of a deceased witness taken at a second trial cannot be impeached by showing that statements at the first trial are inconsistent therewith, where upon the second trial his attention was not directed to such statements. *Omaha Street R. Co. v. Boesen* 764
4. An expert witness, in the absence of a special contract, is entitled only to the statutory fee. *Main v. Sherman County*, 155

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Waters

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Waters—Conclu



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